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THE TRAILHEAD

OUTDOOR NEWS AND ISSUES FROM AROUND THE REGION

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The mark of a successful man is one that has spent an entire day on the bank of a river without feeling guilty about it.

-Chinese Philosopher

Usually when people think about outdoor recreation, or the outdoor industry—myself included—it's usually of good times recreating outside, yes? Pursuing our hobbies, challenges, and escapes from the everyday, we love to ski, mountain bike, climb, and paddle- whatever. We purchase new gear to help us get the most for our passions and outdoor fun. Gear, I often think, is a necessity to pursue my endeavors and, as my wife will attest- I've got a whole room to show for it. The outdoor manufacturers build new stuff every year, new technology evolves to keep us warm when it's snowing, and dry when we're on the water. Sometimes we challenge ourselves and put ourselves in danger in the pursuit of going higher, steeper, longer- but with proper investment in our skills and gear, we (usually) survive.

Right before this issue went to press, there was- as I'm sure you know- a devastating earthquake that rocked the island nation of Haiti. Thousands lost their lives, millions lost their homes. The country basically is in shambles. Money poured in from well intentioned sources, people sprang to offer aid, pop singles were recorded, etc. One source of aid struck me as unique when I heard about it, and then the light bulb came on- of course, the outdoor industry. A local Utah company that makes headlamps raised funds in matching donations with their employees, and in addition to the cash, donated 230 headlamps to various agencies. The headlamps are invaluable to doctors and relief workers at orphanages. Another company donated 300 tents. What I see as something lightweight, packable, ventilated, fits nicely in my backpack—someone in need sees as a life saving shelter when they have lost their home. Several outdoor companies have offered their products in the relief effort—equally under the radar.

When I contacted my source at one of these companies and asked him if I could expose their donation to our readers, he demurred. "We didn't do this for any PR advantage- it was just the right thing to do." Cheers to you.

The timing of this fits well with the profile that writer Sean Zimmerman-Wall has put together of Dr. Geoffrey Tabin. About 10 months ago, I'd read Tabin's book, *Blind Corners*, and found it a great read. Soon thereafter I met a friend of Tabin's and he mentioned that he would put me in touch to do a story. When contacted, Tabin graciously agreed to a profile, but that he was leaving for Africa for a month, and we best do it soon. In addition to having climbed the 'Seven Summits' and numerous other fantastic climbs and adventures, Tabin now travels the world treating people with cataract blindness- literally restoring sight to thousands in places where they could never afford it. In addition to his world travels for the benefit of others, he still finds time to ski and recreate around the Wasatch.

As for the rest of the spring issue- the snow has been a bit thin up north, but the reports from the southern part of the state indicate that it will be a big water year, and the rivers will be flowing well this spring and summer. Renowned photographer Lee Cohen writes about high times on the Colorado in big water, and we try to break it down from there to the San Rafael, Middle Fork, and the smaller streams of southern Utah. No matter the size of the river or water- it's always great to get out and leave the world behind for a bit. We're lucky to have so many so accessible, and in the end- fortunate to be able to get out and play at our leisure. Keep the rubber side down!

-Paul Oelerich

SWITCHBACK READER SURVEY

WINTER '09—UTAH POWDER- PLENTIFUL OR PRECIOUS?

123 votes total.

Precious: 77%

It's not even enough at the resorts anymore, skiers and boarders are waiting at the rope lines waiting for them to drop, and then it's a frenzy, manners are out the window and it's a mad rush for the fresh snow. Even venturing to the backcountry-sometimes on the best days there will be a full parking lot at the White Pine Trailhead (Little Cottonwood Canyon). There is no such thing as a leisurely tour for powder anymore- to get the goods you've got to act fast.

-P. Montgomery, Salt Lake City via website

Plentiful: 23%

The key nowadays is knowing when and where to go. Sure the Wasatch is getting crowded as the BC touring scene explodes, but there also seems to be a herder mentality sometimes- people follow tracks to places that have already been skied. With a little creativity and avalanche savvy- it's always possible to find the untracked fluff, in the central Wasatch, and certainly in the areas outside of the tri-canyon, high traffic zone. I'm not giving away my secrets, but there is so much terrain to explore, you just need to find the time.

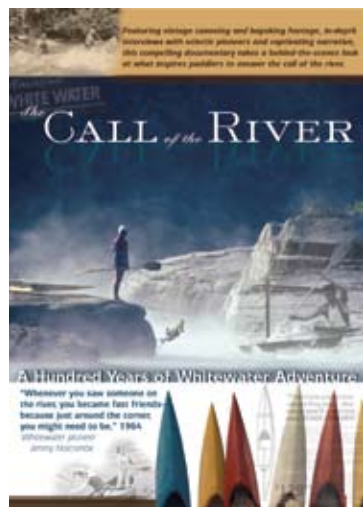
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SPRING 2010 QUESTION—RIVER PERMIT LOTTERY—FAIR OR FLAWED?

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DVD REVIEW



The Call of the River—A Hundred Years of Whitewater Adventure

Produced by Kent Ford
2009 Performance Video Inc.
93 minutes

If you are a paddler of any stripe, be it whitewater, flatwater, in a hardshell, canoe or raft, you'll certainly get great entertainment for watching The Call of the River, produced by award winning videographer, instructional filmmaker and former world-champion Kent Ford.

Right from the beginning of the movie, the Call of the River jumps into great archival and vintage scenes of canoeists practicing worthless, but incredible feats of balance, rollovers and stunts. Interviews with pioneers of canoeing fill the first part of the movie, recounting their stories of

exploration, as the canoe was a relatively new means of river transport- and often made of leaky canvas.

With the advent of World War 2, the technology- and participation- exploded, thanks to Grumman aircraft, and their surplus of aluminum, and manufacturing space. Whitewater was never the same as the new Grumman aluminum canoes enabled the boats to absorb blows to rocks and other hazards without fear of serious damage. The durability offered the opportunity to previously uncharted rivers and streams.

By the '60's guidebooks began to be published, furthering the growth of the sport, and leading to the current vocabulary still in use today- for river ratings, gradients and flows. The missing factor- getting real time river levels. This prompted a paddler named Randy Carter to paint river height lines on area bridges, and establish a network of local residents near the bridges. If you wanted to know the river level, you could get the residents phone number from Carter's guidebook, and ask them to take a look at the bridge near their house for the level.

The next step was covering the canoe cockpits, which led to paddlers being able to roll- the predecessor to the modern kayak, leading to yet even more opportunity for exploration due to the size a sleek design of the kayak.

Salida, CO soon became the epicenter of the kayaking craze, hosting Europeans and Americans in huge paddling contests on the Arkansas River. Several of the top Euros stayed to establish schools and clinics, again fueling the growth. Paddling clubs developed across the country.

A big catalyst for paddling in the '70's? The movie Deliverance spurred thousands into the water- many unskilled folks seeking adventure. Soon thereafter, the raft industry became popular- as more folks ventured to the water. Ford intersperses some great scenes here that show inexperienced paddlers getting thrown from rafts, and tipped in the rapids, as well as big water pioneer Walt Blackadar, whose exploits led to a mass audience via Sports Illustrated.

Materials and designs evolved, guidebooks evolved, as

did the entire industry to the sport that we know today, including whitewater rodeo, squirt boating, slalom, big drops over waterfalls and free-style maneuvers. As noted in the film however, it's not about going bigger or faster- but always about the spirit of adventure found everywhere on the river

The narration, interviews, and certainly the footage all combine for a well told story, and richly detailed history of the sport. It will certainly give you the Jones to get out on the water yourself.

-Paul Oelerich

Winner!

I have skied in Utah my whole life and never skied in the backcountry. As I get older I seem to be gravitating toward more solitude, fresh powder and beautiful scenery. I think enjoying the backcountry with a small group of friends away from the crowds of a resort sounds more appealing every time I strap on my skis. I know the exercise involved in climbing a snow covered ridge is just what I need to keep me in better shape, not to mention the end reward of skiing down it.

Congratulations to Paul Pitts of Magna, he wins the contest from our winter issue that includes an avalanche awareness class with Utah Mountain Adventures, and equipment from Brooks Range Mountaineering and Voile USA.

To enter our spring whitewater giveaway that includes kayaking lessons from Utah Kayak School, go to www.outdoorutah.com/adventurejournal and tell us why you would like to win.

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THE GUIDES CORNER

By Tim Gaylord

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Favorite run in Utah?

The age old question – and always a hard one to answer. All the sections we run have their own uniqueness. For me it would probably be Lodore Canyon on the Green River through Dinosaur National Monument. This trip offers stunning beauty, great interpretive opportunities and hikes, fascinating geological features and oh yea- did I mention very challenging rapids!

Best Trip for a First timer or Veteran?

First timer—I would recommend trying our Desolation Canyon trip, probably the most understated trip in Utah. From the plane flight to start

the trip, to soothing flat-water stretches, to beautiful campsites, rich historical stops, and it's deeper than the Grand Canyon at Bright Angel trail. A great family trip with progressively more difficult rapids and the opportunity to learn how to use an inflatable kayak.

Veteran – head for Cataract Canyon in high water (late May to early June). With some of the biggest waves you can find in North America, Cataract is famous for its exciting and challenging high water. We use triple rigs to negotiate this big water and that's an experience all in itself, the best roller coaster ride you'll ever have – you have to go to know!

What river offers the best scenery? Best whitewater?

I would say that our bike/raft combo trips offer some of the most unique perspectives of the Utah landscape. There's nothing quite like testing your riding skills and seeing the expansive vistas from above and then carving your way through the canyon below. Our Moab/Westwater 2 day biking/2 day rafting trip offers a great trip option. Go from giant ponderosa pine stands and alpine setting to expansive views of the Fisher Valley to the challenging rapids of Westwater Canyon. Westwater has numerous fun and exciting rapids and has even earned the nickname "The Little Grand Canyon".

Non essential– but great to have with you piece of equipment?

Although we suggest you take your watch off and just travel on river time – there are times when it is nice to have an idea of what time it is. A travel clock is great to have along for that moment in the middle of the night when you wake up and think it is time to get up only to look at the clock and see it is just 4 AM!!! An item to leave behind – cell phones. The total disconnect is one of the most powerful things about a backcountry trip and besides you won't be getting service anyhow.

Biggest Whitewater?

No doubt on this one—Cataract Canyon at anything over 50,000 CFS in one or our Triple Rigs. This is one of the most exciting rides you'll find anyplace. I've had the opportunity to see it over 70,000 CFS in 3 different decades with the highest being around 80,000 CFS. When you can put a triple rig (24 feet in length) on the face of a wave and still not be to the top of it – you know it's big! There is nothing quite like the adrenaline rush you get from experiencing these types of water levels and rapids.

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Tim Gaylord

Outdoor News



San Rafael National Monument?

Monique Beeley

MORE NATIONAL MONUMENTS FOR UTAH?

Back in 1996, President Bill Clinton issued a surprise creation of the Grand Staircase-Escalante national Monument in Utah by invoking the Antiquities Act of 1906 that gave the President the power to establish the monument and prevent a huge proposed coal mine from being developed.

Recently, local politicians have decried a leaked document from the Interior Department that suggests the Obama administration is considering creating more national monuments throughout the west to block potential coal and oil development, including 2 in Utah. The document which was marked as "internal draft-not for release" lists the San Rafael Swell and Cedar Mesa as possible monuments for protection.

Needless to say, an uproar went up in many political circles around the State, condemning the action as a threat to businesses such as mining and grazing, as the land would be locked to further development. Environmental and conservation groups were pleased of the thought of protecting more wild lands in the State, but Utah's congressional delegates, senators and Governor were highly critical of the Interior Departments alleged plans.

State Rep. Mike Noel, R-Kanab said the Antiquities Act "runs counter to the sovereignty of Utah." Both he and Sen. Kevin VanTassell, R-Vernal convinced their colleagues to present a bill containing a resolution that would condemn the proposal. Utah Senator Bob Bennett also introduced legislation aimed at barring the Obama administration from designating any new national monuments. The proposal was recently rejected by a vote of 58-38. Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C. called any move by the administration to name new monuments a "big government land-grab that appeases liberal environmental lobbyists" at the expense of American jobs.

The Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance praised the thought of more protection for Utah lands stating that there "are more areas here that are threatened and deserve protection than any other western state- perhaps in the lower 48."

Utah Governor Gary Herbert met with Interior Secretary Salazar after the memo leak and was told that the memo was simply a draft, and that there is no action forthcoming. "He's assured me that there is nothing being fast-tracked, there's not going to be any clandestine effort, no midnight surprise of 'hey, we just created a new monument,'" Herbert said.

SQUATTERS RELEASES LIMITED 529 OUD BRUIN BEER!

Squatters Beers has recently released a limited distribution of 2100 bottles of its new 529 Oud Bruin beer. The 750ml bottles will be sold exclusively at their downtown SLC pub and at the Squatters Roadhouse in Park City for \$18.95. The Oud Bruin is a blend between the malty sweetness of a newer ale, and the tart sourness of an aged ale. The 529 refers to the number of days the brew was barrel aged and is based on the 'Oud Bruin/Flanders Red' style enjoyed by brewmaster Jenny Talley on a trip to Belgium in 2004. After aging for the 18 months and achieving optimum sourness, the beer is blended with a 2 month 529 that is sweet, resulting in a tart and complex brew that is rich in flavor and highly drinkable. The 529 weighs in at a 7.15% abv and is available to go- until it's gone! www.squatters.com



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Mike Steen Jumps the Troll Wall!

Photos courtesy of Mike Steen

Salt Lake Resident Mike Steen travels the world to jump and fly off of buildings and cliffs. When not teaching others to fly locally he enjoys flying paragliders and speed gliders off the peaks of the Wasatch. Recently he traveled to Norway where he flew his wingsuit off of the Trollveggen (Troll) wall, a drop of nearly 3500 feet. Mike is a co-owner of Cloud 9 Paragliding in Draper.

What's it like to fly off of the Troll Wall?

Flying a wingsuit off of any large cliff is really awe-

some. The Troll wall is special because of its grandeur both in the climbing world and in the BASE jumping community. It's one of the places that the "father" of modern BASE jumping, Carl Boenish, pioneered. If he could see us now flying wingsuits for over 2 minutes from the exit point that he opened (and eventually died jumping from), I'm pretty sure he would be proud.

What would this compare to in the States?

It is hard to compare the Trollstigen Region's cliffs to anything in the US, but Half Dome and El Cap in Yosemite would be close.

How did you get into BASE jumping and speed flying?

I've always been into things that fly, from growing up around airports with my parents who are both corporate pilots. I moved to Utah from Michigan for the mountains and the skiing and fell in love with a new type of flight, paragliding. After becoming a paragliding instructor and tandem pilot for Cloud 9, I got involved with skydiving which led to BASE jumping. I did my first jump course with Baxter Gillespie a local multi-sport mad man. I was at a paragliding trade show in the winter of 2005 in Europe and brought a speed flying wing home with me and started finding places to fly it around the Wasatch.

Where can you BASE jump or speed fly around here?

There are quite a few legal cliffs in and around the Wasatch, not 5000' granite cliffs, but 300-500 footers that keep me sane in between trips to Europe. Speed flying is limited to launches that we access by hiking or bumming rides from snowmobilers. We do events throughout the winter at some of the ski areas, but those require additional insurance policies, rules and lots of red-tape.

How does it compare to flying off the Aiguille du Midi?

In Europe no one cares if you ski from the tram, fly a speed wing or ski BASE off a cliff. The rules are few and far between- which for my sports opens up a whole new level of fun. The Aiguille is really amazing, just to go through the ice tunnel to the top of the rope line and look down the North Face into the Chamonix Valley 9000' below is a treat. Then to launch a 10 square meter wing and carving a line down some of the most famous rock and ice on the planet, need I say more?


Compare the scene here and Europe and elsewhere?

Europe has numerous lifts, gondolas and trams that allow access to some of the largest peaks in the Alps. There are very few rules because of the lack of fear of being sued by the landowners and businesses operating the lifts. We have some really good terrain here in the US, but easy access is key, Europe has it, the US doesn't.

How do you see wingsuit BASE jumping and speed flying evolving in the future?


Wingsuits have come a long way since the first ones were flown off of cliffs. The combination of the skills of the athletes and the advances in technology leave the sky as the limit. Three years ago cliffs that were yielding 40 second wingsuit flights are today seeing flights over 2 minutes. Variations in flight paths allow jumpers today to fly along the wall at distances of less than 10 feet.

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How do you prepare?

I eat healthy food like Taco Bell, Wendys and my new favorite, La Hacienda in Draper, while doing bicep curls with PBR's. I do so many sports that I tend to stay in pretty good shape just by being out. I also travel with Ambien and a few generic antibiotics for when my iron stomach takes a turn for the worse, or the 24 hours sitting on an airplane messes with my biological clock.

Your recommendations to someone who wants to get into it?

Get proper training from a reputable individual or school, use certified and proven gear and be smart. Teaming up with locals and letting them mentor you is very beneficial. Be prepared to spend some dollars to do it right, don't cut corners- this is aviation- you might not get a second chance.

How do you alleviate the obvious risks?

I don't think I'll ever be able to alleviate the risk, but I do as much as I can to minimize it by taking the proper steps to learn the techniques and skills. I do these sports because they're a part of me, and without them I wouldn't be a happy, healthy 27 year old traveling the world doing some of the coolest activities on the planet.



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River Permit Lottery Fair or Flawed?

The permit systems to float western rivers with a private party vary from state to state and river to river. In Utah some rivers such as the Green through Lodore Canyon or Yampa Canyon require you to submit an application for a permit, which is distributed through a lottery. Other popular runs such as Westwater Canyon and Cataract Canyon on the Colorado are issued on a first-come, first-served basis.

Every year permits to float four of the most popular rivers in Idaho are distributed through a lottery. This year the lottery went entirely online. Much lore surrounds the system and many people hate it having been entering unsuccessfully for years on end. Other people seem to go every year. The debate- is the river permit lottery fair or flawed?

Flawed By Lance Clark

Let me start by stating that I am not opposed to having a river permit lottery. As a reasonable environmentalist I believe that sometimes limiting access to a resource is the only way to ensure the resource is worth accessing in the future.

My belief in limited access hinges on allowing everyone equal access to the resource. The lottery does not. Not everyone has an equal chance of seeing these awesome rivers. The current system has some flaws that favor people with enough money and that don't mind flexing the rules for their own benefit.

Under the current online system each person pays \$6 for a chance at each river they want to float. Since the odds of drawing aren't very good it makes sense to enter each lottery once to increase the chance of drawing a permit. That costs \$24. A husband and wife can spend nearly \$50 just for the chance at a permit. For lower income enthusiasts this

can quickly become prohibitive.

Someone in a much higher income bracket can hold their own private ballot stuffing party. All it takes is access to free email and some cash. Simply open an email account on behalf of a bunch of your friends and enter them in the lottery as well. For a few hundred dollars you can virtually guarantee some type of permit.

I'm not opposed to a group of friends pooling their resources and all applying together, that just makes sense. I am opposed to someone with the resources applying on behalf of people that don't have any idea what is going on.

If you have ever had to call someone and explain to them that they need to take a week's vacation in June to float a river- you are the person I'm talking about. You should have your one chance at a river, like everyone else. If you are really worth having along on a trip someone will invite you often enough.

A prominent medical professional from my home town has gone every year. One year he called my grandfather up to inform him he had won the lottery. My grandfather had never been on a raft in his life. I

don't know how much cash this guy pumped into the lottery- but based on how wide the net has been cast it the past it must be significant.

The rafter in question must have a file cabinet full of personal information on everyone in town, including driver's license numbers. That and a pile of cash is all it takes to tip the scales.

If you are going to draw for access to public resources then everyone should have equal access to the drawing and an equal chance at winning.

I would imagine that going online will allow for some sort of control. Can we hire an Indian call center to dial up the winners and ask them if they are even aware that they are in the drawing? Can we check IP addresses to see if 200 entries flood in one day?

I'm not a web expert or security wonk but I am sure there is a cheap and effective identification system out there. I would really like to go on The Selway someday and I don't want to spend five grand to do it.

Todd Airmet

Fair

By Mindy Hong

The current lottery system is cheap and easy. All you do is go onto recreation.gov and fill out a form. Put in a credit card good for \$6 and you get 4 chances at drawing a permit to float one of the four Idaho Rivers on the list.

I understand that there are people out there buying as many entries as possible but I don't think it has much effect on the system as a whole. If anything these hoarders would potentially lead to unused permits as they draw multiple times on conflicting dates. Picking up a discarded permit is cheap and rewards the diligent, not the rich.

Rafting is inherently expensive. The equipment, travel and time investment is significant. A trip on one of the Idaho rivers is going to cost several hundred dollars, at a minimum. The cost of the lottery even for a handful of entries for a family is not a big percentage of the cost.

There are also other strategies to increase the odds of winning a permit. You can join a pool, study the statistics and go for a shoulder date.

Make a pact with your 24 closest boating friends. Remind them to enter the lottery, coordinate dates, and make sure everyone puts in their \$6. You just multiplied your odds of floating enormously, for free.

It is a little known fact that certain days are statistically

less popular for entries, even in prime season. The Forest Service publishes the data necessary to figure out the pattern and increase your odds by 10-30%. I'm not going to give away the secret, but it is surprising. Anyone willing to take a couple of hours to crunch the numbers further multiplies their odds.

Finally the age old safety date is a tried and true method for getting a permit. A brief glance at the permit demand charts shows people tend not to apply for dates late in the season. This is also true of very early in the season. Going down the river in August is just as fun and ten times more likely.

Finally you don't have to win the lottery. Many people that win end up winning multiple permits, end up not getting to go or for whatever reason cancel their trip. The permit is then returned to the system so someone else can claim it on a first come first served basis. March 16 is the magic date for this. Get on a high speed connection and get ready for mayhem.

Even later in the year people cancel at the last minute. Keep on the website and keep your gear loaded. You can eventually score a permit and head to Idaho for some of the best floating in the country.

Using these systems I have drawn or picked up permits every year that I have had time to float, including this year. My wife and I both enter and that seems to be enough.

Some day I may get tired of the Middle Fork in August and waste my \$6 on a June attempt, but I doubt it.

Ultimately the system may have some flaws but I can't think of a better way to run it. Maybe I'm just lucky, but so far it has worked for me.



Todd Airmet

My Favorite (easy) River Recipe

Cooking deliciously on the river needn't require the entire kitchen, with some simple planning anyone can enjoy a great meal on the river- wherever and whenever. Here's a sample from Amy Oelerich of mediumRARE in Salt Lake City, check out her website at www.mediumrarechefs.com.

Fresh herbs are an indulgence on a river trip, but well worth the expense. If properly stored, herbs will last the entire trip and can be used in all your recipes.

(Try tossing some in with your morning eggs.)

This recipe is fast, fun and tasty. All you need is a grill, aluminum foil and a fresh piece of fish. Its best to do this recipe on the first night of your river trip since fish tends to thaw out faster than any other proteins.

Fresh Fish with Fresh Herbs and Butter

Chop a mixture of fresh herbs (basil, oregano, chives, thyme, dill) and mix together.

Take the fish and place on a sheet of aluminum foil making sure the foil is big enough to cover the entire piece.

Toss in butter, lemon slices, pepper, 2 Tablespoons



of liquid (juice, water, wine, beer) and fresh herbs.

Seal up package and toss directly on grill or coals and cook about 10- 20 minutes depending on thickness of fish.

Serve with Rice and Grilled Asparagus. Yum!

Photo: Colin Meagher

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Cataract Canyon

Blissful Days on the Colorado

Story and Photos by Lee Cohen



Cataract Canyon was one of the last places the white man explored in America. No small wonder, as it truly is in the middle of nowhere. Nowadays, you can four-wheel into the Doll House, about twelve hundred feet above the river and just upstream from the beginning of the river canyon. This usually takes hours, but still does not get you access to the actual canyon. To experience Cat you have to be on the water, and to get there is a three day float- under most circumstances. A motorized rig can do it in hours but this belies the escape from the mechanizations most of us head to the river for in the first place. The only reason to bring a motor into it is to save time, and while that may be a factor for tourists in a hurry, it does not weigh in for those who truly want to experience the river and feel it the way it really is.

Nothing beats winding up the ski season with a river trip, and last spring we got to do just that, pulling a Cat permit for early May. After a week of tuning up the boats and getting everything else together we headed down to Green River, stopping for the customary river runner's burgers at Ray's Tavern before finishing the drive to the Mineral Bottom put in.

Eight of us heading to Cataract for prime spring runoff after a fat winter, nothing record breaking- but

still very high water. We'd float for three days and hit Cat on day four. To make The Big Drops safer we're running a triple rig, three big boats lashed together at numerous points in numerous ways making one giant boat, to try to decrease the possibility of flipping. The three-in-one giant makes for easy socializing between rafts, just step right up. You can move around freely and we had plenty of room to begin with, only eight of us on three eighteen footers.

Putting on at dusk, we float until midnight, definitely a new experience. Sushi on the river for meal one! Eat the perishables first. Planning is the key, and this aspect of river trips often takes on military characteristics. But once all said and done, being on the river ain't nothing like being in the army. Fortunately for us, Paul our trip leader, spent several years guiding, a lot of it on this stretch of water, and our equipment and menu is all in place.

To me, being on the river reminds me of going on tour following a band. You're traveling by day to the next venue and every night is the show. Except that when we pull off the river at midnight the first night, the only show I'm gonna see is the one going on the inside of my eyelids. Ferrying pads and bags up the short embankment takes a few minutes but it's not long before we're all flat on our backs staring at a sky brilliant with stars. At dawn I pop my head up and see that

we have bivvied right next to another group of boaters- we had no idea they were even there when we pulled off in the total darkness.

Back on the river in the morning the stove and griddle are broken out and we have bagels and lox as we float--the triple rig makes for an awesome restaurant. It's a great privilege and comfort of this life to wile away the hours with friends floating down the quiet Colorado with nothing to do and nowhere to be. Along the way we pull off and break out the clubs for a little whiffle ball river golf- hole number one. A bail bucket serves as the hole, you don't have to putt it in, you just have to make contact. John Wesley Powell should have been as lucky as us.

The second night we make camp on a series of ledges, a little upriver from a camp known as Jasper. There's a small beach but it seems like the water might rise on it so we set our bags and pads on the rocks. Dinner is served and dishes are cleaned. Something about this camp is so classic, the multiple little ledges serving as the different floors of our river hotel, our little nook on the Colorado. The sound of the river flow is the lullaby of the eons, serenading our souls while we sleep.

On day three there's plenty of time to kill on the flatwater, so we stop a couple of times to play some



more river golf. Then about a mile above the confluence we pull off and hike a trail which winds up and up and leads to the rim above the Colorado, just below the merging of the Colorado and the Green. It's a steady climb but not too long, a bit more than 1000 vertical- about an hour hike. We top out on giant slickrock boulders that step to the edge of the Canyonlands, the little spaces between them make you realize they are basically just perched, hanging there right on the edge. Fantastic views all the way around—the Doll House to the south River right, Needles to the south River left, buttes and mesas that hide most of the Maze to our southwest, the Anticline overlook area across the river. After the hike it's only a few miles float to camp, and we pull off into an opening in the tamarisk at the top of Spanish Bottom. We set up the kitchen in the shady alcove, all tucked in and protected from the sun, boats tied to tammies floating on the river's edge. Just yards up from camp it opens up and golf clubs come out and the river golf tourney continues. The rivalry takes on a name-the Cataract Canyon Open. A trail here links all camps along the shore in the Spanish Bottom area and leads up to the Dollhouse.

The River Gods have willed us a layover here so tomorrow we have the option of hiking up to the Doll House. Everyone but Paul and I take the hike;

we opt for some shade and R & R. I fall deep into my book and barely hear the rangers pull up. They chat us up a bit and advise that the river will be coming up a couple of feet to about 50K CFS, big water. Paul inquires about the new feature we'd heard about which appeared over the winter in Big Drop II, what is being called "The Claw"?

That night it's Thanksgiving Dinner, giving thanks for being on the river, giving thanks that tomorrow we run Cataract Canyon. A feast ensues, featuring barbequed turkey breast, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, the full fixins'. Chairs line the shore, a small fire is in



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the pan, its story tellin' time and time to tip a few back.

The next day in Cat goes by fast. We get into a stream of rapids not long after putting on the river, they call them 1 to 10, then there's a flat section by White Canyon before we hit "Mile Long", you guessed it, a mile of steady rapids.

Then it's the Big Drops, the biggest rapids in Cat, some of the biggest in the lower forty-eight. We stop to scout Big Drop I and then Big Drop II. There we see "The Claw", a wicked sleeper hole that you can barely see, just wisps of water hovering over it where the river drops out, and the giant backwave on the downstream side- the water looks like a claw waiting to rip your boat apart. Always a threat, the run on Big Drop II now requires more finesse and care than ever.

You still ride the left eddy line in and have to thread between the Marker Hole and the Ledge Hole to come in underneath Niagara (Hole) but now instead of a roller coaster cruise in the wave train on the way out, you must contend with "The Claw". The move under the Marker Hole has to be quicker and tighter so you don't ride the wave train into "The Claw". The two guys on this trip who used to guide Cat could not stop talking about it.

We enter the rapid in good position and cheat a little right to make sure we avoid getting sucked in. It's a good clean run, an exciting ride with a lot of water in our faces. Going by the hole of "The Claw" Paul is yelling, "See it? There it is...see it? Man that hole was deep." We ride out Big Drop III into the wave train and on into quieter water. There is a lot of hootin' and hollerin' as the crescendo of our trip passes, and we look for a beach to spend the final night. We find a nice sandy bar on river left and pull off, get dinner going and break out the clubs for the final round.

While we're sitting around we're still feeling the excitement of Cataract Canyon. A couple of hours go by and we notice that two groups that were right behind us never come through and it starts giving us the creeps. They were walking up to scout Big Drop II as we were heading back to our triple rig to run it. They didn't come through in the few hours of daylight that remained while we wrapped up the Cataract Canyon Open. Sadly, the next morning we heard, and then saw an NPS helicopter fly in up river a bit, and we knew it meant trouble. The next day we found out someone lost their life in the rapids, probably from one of those groups right behind us. It was another reminder that taking on the river is exciting and fun but it's serious and dangerous, you try to go with the flow and do things right, but in the end there's so much that can go wrong so fast. All you can do is respect the river and try to stay on your toes.

And the winner of the 2009 Cataract Canyon Open?? Our buddy Mike, winner of the 2003 Masters, edging out the field of ski bums by a considerable margin.

Why do we love the River so much?

Not everyone is lucky enough to have the experience of going on a river trip, but for those who have the answers, it's *so* obvious. We love it because it's relaxing. It's adventure. It's fun. It's good times and good people. It's another world, one that's magic and puts you in the moment as completely as any other world out there can. You might not be getting much work done on the river, but it's time well spent. River therapy is therapeutic for the soul.



Lee Cohen came to Utah for the skiing but soon learned that there's a lot more going on here than just snow. The desert and the river are a good part of that something else. He's planning on practicing his golf this spring so he can be more respectable during upcoming rounds of river golf.



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Canoeing

The Little Grand Canyon

By Jared Hargrave



Vince Pierce

I hate water. More accurately, I hate to get wet. This is why I don't know what I was thinking when the idea came up to canoe down the San Rafael River through Utah's Little Grand Canyon. In general, I pursue water sports with about as much effort as I lick asphalt. Rafting in particular is especially offensive. Past experiences such as frightening encounters with rapids, spinning in whirlpools of death, and getting stuck in an overturned kayak (in a swimming pool) have all contributed to scaring me away from any future aquatic pursuits.

Each and every time I've gotten into an inflatable boat and pointed it downstream, something has gone wrong, which also meant I got wet. Twice on guided trips, the raft has been tacked around a rock, which resulted in an ice cold, near-hypothermic bath in water that was once snow in the not-so-distant past. Another incident occurred on the Colorado River near Moab when I flipped an inflatable kayak, ruining my friend's camera. Turns out electronics also have an aversion to water.

With these experiences in mind, along with my desire to push away from the paradise of dry land in a boat at an all-time low, I must have been smoking pine bark rolled in college-ruled notebook paper to decide that floating the San Rafael was a good idea.

As it turns out, the trip idea sat up and punched me in the face when I was desperate for relief from sweltering weather while hiking with my friend, Vince, as we searched for pictographs in the San

Rafael Swell. After a very hot day scrambling up talus slopes beneath cloudless skies, and fighting off biting flies with tamarisk switches, we descended a canyon that spilled down to the San Rafael River where at that exact moment, two guys and a girl were floating by at a high rate of speed on the snow-melt swollen waters. The ride that threesome was having while leaning back into the universal position made for tipping back cold beers as they let the flow take them through a spectacular Utah landscape on a furnace of a day was too much to bear.

As we wavered in our sweat-drenched boots, watching the trio paddle by, a plan was drawn up that we would seek relief by doing the same, and soon. At that moment, despite my phobia of water and the damn wetness, traveling through red rock country by boat seemed far better than trekking through dry, dusty land. A float down the San Rafael River through the Little Grand Canyon had now become a bona-fide mission.

About a week later, we rented a fiberglass canoe from a Salt Lake outdoor retail store, and loaded it up onto my Nissan Pathfinder. Even in northern Utah, the springtime heat wave continued. This fact only strengthened our thirst for cool waters in a sandstone canyon, despite my unspoken misgivings about the trip. After only a few hours drive along the Wasatch Front, we were caravanning onto the dirt roads of the San Rafael Swell, descending to the shores of the river near the San Rafael Bridge. This is where we dropped off the shuttle vehicle before driving to the put-in at Fuller Bottom.

The desert-heated air was muggy by the riverside

as I bushwhacked through tamarisk thickets to get a look at the water. The San Rafael was still swollen and muddy from spring runoff, and it flowed quickly. My nervousness increased as I envisioned the canoe tipping me over into the dark as water, pregnant with sediment, filled my mouth.

As morning turned to afternoon, we unloaded the canoe and packed it with everything we would need for a two-day float down the river. Camping gear, extra clothing, food, and of course, a cooler filled with beer was wedged under the seats. With anticipation (and my apprehension) in the red, we slid the boat into the cold river. With a silent goodbye to dry land, I jumped in the canoe.

The San Rafael River, which is a trickle most times of the year, was flowing fast and smooth along muddy banks covered with dry vegetation. The current pulled us downstream toward the giant walls of Utah's Little Grand Canyon as we fumbled with our paddles, trying to keep the boat pointed straight. The uninspiring flats at Fuller Bottom allowed me to relax, get practice at controlling the boat, and take in the view of the approaching San Rafael Gorge. With no rapids in sight, we drank a few beers and took pictures. My fear of water was pushed to the back of my mind (or was swallowed with my beer) as I laid back and decided this trip could actually be fun.

Soon, however, the wide section of river transformed into a red-rock channel where the water course sped along through narrow cuts. Startled by the increase in speed and lack of room, we sat up,

grabbed our paddles, and concentrated on the task at hand. The river wove among hairpin turns of vertical banks covered in dead trees and boulders. The speed of the current pulled us into a collision course with dirt walls as we strained to steer the canoe. After clearing one corner, another would loom over us. Our novice efforts to steer were in vain as the side of the boat slammed into the walls. The front of the boat got tangled in exposed tree roots and bushes, scratching our exposed skin. We pushed away with our paddles, fighting against the current that kept us in place.

My fear was nearly made manifest. We crashed the boat and were forced to extract it from a web of branches bleached by the sun. Somehow we got the boat out, but my goal to stay dry had to be sacrificed. Clearly this trip would not be a mere float down a lazy river, but a water-filled bobsled course navigated in a tippy, red canoe.

After a little bit of trial but mostly error, we figured out how to maneuver the canoe through the curves. Our sequence of survival went like this: expect a dogleg corner before it sneaks up on you, make sure the paddler in front lays off (paddling just speeds you into the bank faster) and the back paddler has to muscle his paddle in the water to swing the nose of the craft around to the desired direction. Unfortunately, too much swing allowed the current to twist the boat around, causing it to sideswipe the bank and tip over. Tipping over meant water got into the boat. Water in the boat meant less maneuverability. Less maneuverability meant a greater chance of hitting the next fast-approaching riverbank. And so it goes.

Despite the tipping, soaked clothes, and fear of what brush-infested wall lurked around the bend, I was actually having a lot of fun. Navigating through the ribbon of turns was an adrenaline rush and before long, every thought was focused on the task at hand.

When we came out the other side where the river slowed down and became blessedly wide, a dome of cliff and sky revealed itself.

Before long, we came to the mouth of Virgin Spring Canyon where we planned on staying the night. The canyon is lush with cottonwood trees and other desert plants and has several good spots to set up camp. After a short search, we chose a cozy campsite in the sand beneath a protective rock overhang. Once camp was established, we enjoyed glorious cold beer far from any convenience store or road. One of the best parts of having the canoe was the ability to pack a cooler full of ice, and the payoff was heavenly.

After cooking up dinner and a restful night's sleep, we took a morning hike up the canyon and found ancient pictographs on the canyon wall. Further up, the way terminated at an

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and I stared down into the depths of the gorge and made final our commitment to the trip. Now on the river, we were able to experience the canyon's true scale. Our necks ached as we constantly looked up and stared at the red rock that enveloped us.

The river in the Little Grand Canyon was wider with only a few small rapids. We now had freedom to relax and take in the amazing view. The only problem we encountered was, as the river got wider, the water level got lower. Sandbars became our nemesis. It was impossible to see the shallow bands of gravel through muddy water, so our overloaded canoe scraped the riverbed, often coming to a complete stop. With frustrating effort, we shoveled through the sand with our paddles to free the boat. But the rocks were sharp and small holes soon appeared on the floor of the

Jared Hargrave

fiberglass hull. Again, we took on water and began to sink, creating an even greater chance of becoming shipwrecked on the next sandbar waiting for us downriver.

To keep the boat afloat, we had to pull to shore and pour out water by tipping the canoe. Other times we simply lounged and half-heartedly bailed water with cups as we sunned ourselves. Steering the canoe was impossible with all the water weight, so we allowed the current to take us where it chose.

Just after midday, the San Rafael River sped up again as it flowed into a lawn of reeds and thickets. Up ahead, we could see the San Rafael Bridge fast

approaching. We hastily bailed more water, gathered our paddles, and maneuvered the swamped boat through a maze of canals until we reached the takeout under the bridge. Just like that, the ride had come to an end.

Soaked, sunburned, and covered in insect bites, the two of us pulled our battered canoe from the water, loaded up Vince's truck that was shuttled to the bridge the day before, and toasted the voyage with our last warm beer.

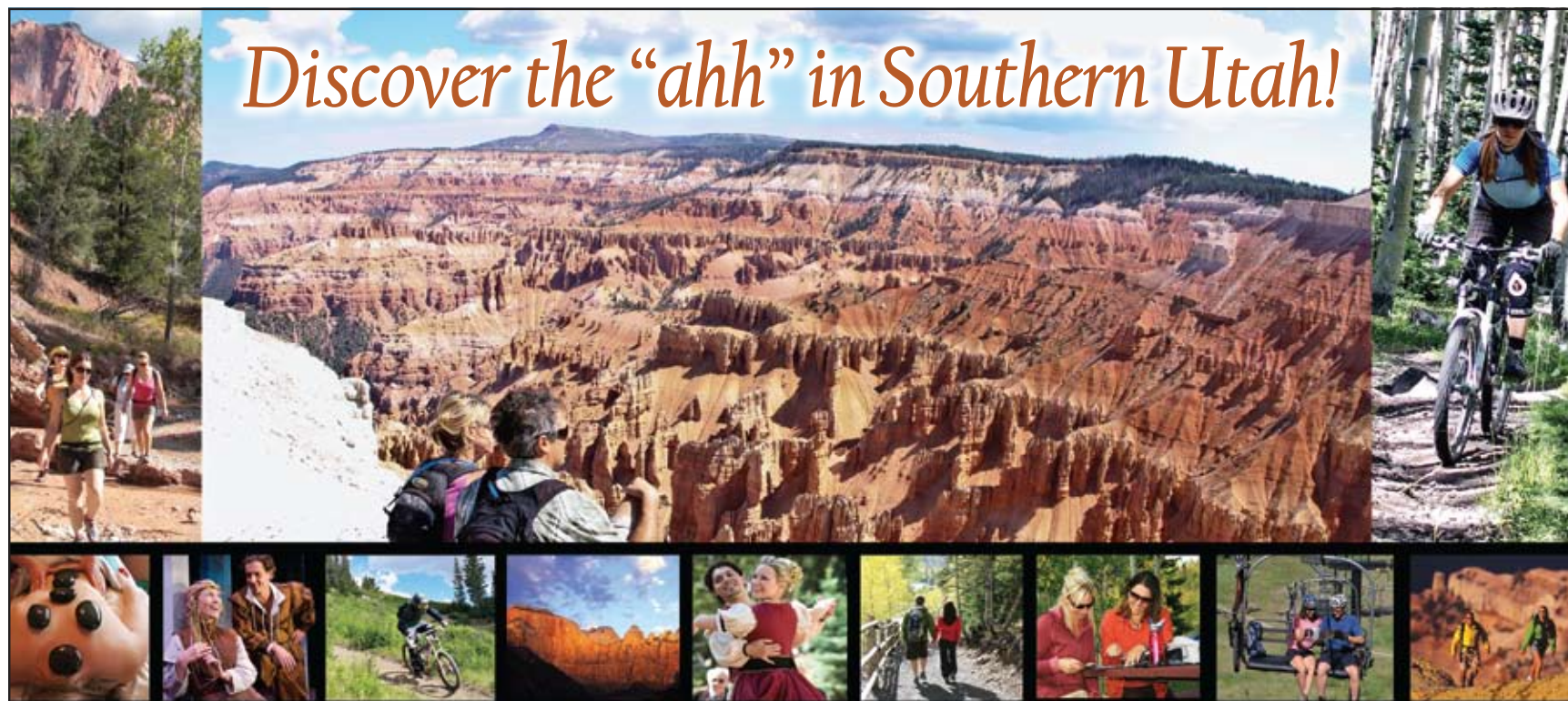
We were back in civilization. Children splashed in a shallow eddy beneath the bridge. The roar of ATVs drowned out the sound of water on the rocks. Cars rumbled over the bridge and pulled over, so families could spill out to take pictures and eat ice cream. As I drank my end-of-trip beverage amidst the noisy landscape, I thought back to everything we saw and experienced. The sheer, smooth walls of the Little Grand Canyon, the haunting pictographs tucked away behind groves of cottonwood trees, and the image of a bright red canoe stowed alongside the green and brown river bottom all wavered like a memory in the heat. I was very glad for the trip down the San Rafael River. I was thankful for the solitude of the Little Grand Canyon. I decided that I love floating down a river as a means to explore the best Utah has to offer. But despite all that, I still hate to get wet.



Jared Hargrave moved to Salt Lake in 2001 and soon realized the unparalleled possibilities for outdoor recreation in Utah. He now travels the state to ski, mountain bike, hike and then write about it. But he still has to force himself to get in the water.

alcove where we knew of a spring to fill our water bottles. Much to our disappointment, the water was dismal and smelled like sulfur. Thinking it better than the silt water of the river, we pumped the noxious spring through a filter and hoped for the best.

Back at camp, we loaded up the canoe and pushed out for a late morning start. The sky was clear and the San Rafael Gorge opened before us into a dramatic hallway of stone. We were entering the Little Grand Canyon. Soon, the highest walls of the canyon surrounded us. We silently floated by as the Wedge Overlook loomed to the north. It was atop that overlook, one week prior to the trip, that Vince



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If you go

The San Rafael in the Little Grand Canyon is a mellow river appropriate for beginners with only having class-1 rapids.

The length from Fuller Bottom to the San Rafael Bridge is 18 miles and can be done in one day, though a leisurely overnight trip is recommended.

The San Rafael River is shallow and best navigated with smaller watercraft like kayaks or canoes. The relatively low water level creates several hazards including fallen trees, shallow rocky sections, undercuts and sharp turns that are difficult to negotiate. It is recommended to float the river only when the CFS is 100 or more. To check the current CFS, visit the USGS website at:

waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/uv?09328500.

To get there

Take highway 6 to Price. Drive south on highway 10 for 28 miles to Castle Dale. Just before the town limits, turn east onto a dirt access road. The road is marked and there is a San Rafael information kiosk just after leaving the highway. Continue east for almost 13 miles to a 4-way intersection. Continue east for 2.5 miles to Buckhorn Wash Road. Go south (be sure to check out the pictographs along the way) and after 9.5 miles you come to the San Rafael Bridge. Leave a take-out vehicle within the log fences then shuttle to Fuller Bottom.

To find Fuller Bottom, go back to the 4-way junction, then south following signs that lead to The Wedge/Fuller Bottom. After ½ mile, turn right onto the road marked Fuller Bottom. After 5.5 miles, there is a parking area near the San Rafael River where a few good put-in spots can be found.

What to bring

A canoe or kayak. Wood, fiberglass or inflatables are all appropriate, although the amount of debris in the shallow river may puncture inflatable watercraft. If on an overnight trip, bring all the essential camping gear. Also bring plenty of water as the river is too muddy to drink from. A water filter is a good thing to have along to pump water from the desert springs, and the river if sediment isn't too high. In the spring and summer months, biting flies are a real problem, so pack bug spray and remember long pants and long-sleeved shirts for camp. And of course, sunscreen is essential to any trip in Utah's red-rock country.

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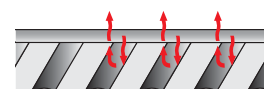
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Dr. Geoffrey Tabin

Giving Eyesight to the Blind

By Sean Zimmerman-Wall
Photos—Geoffrey Tabin Collection

What do you think is the most fun we can have?" The words of Dr. Geoffrey Tabin as I sit waiting to begin my interview. He is conversing with one of his good friends about the possibility of skiing ten resorts in one day. "We'll see what the avalanche danger is, but I think we should start at Snowbird and work our way towards Park City, then move up north to the Ogden slopes." Apparently, the Wasatch Interconnect Tour, a mere seven resorts, just wouldn't cut it. This escapade would involve a bit more excitement and the opportunity to rack up an incredible amount of vertical. Just another wild idea concocted by a brilliant mind with an insatiable thirst for adventure.

Like most of his exploits around the globe, Dr. Tabin relishes the chance to try something many people would deem outrageous or improbable. His extraordinary voyages have brought him to seven continents and a variety of unexplored places in between. In addition to being the fourth person to scale the "Seven Summits", Tabin has pioneered an innumerable list of first ascents and been part of the development of exciting activities like bungee jumping. Currently, Dr. Tabin is working on his most challenging task to date, curing the world of blindness. A seemingly insurmountable goal he's sure he can overcome.

Strong Foundations

Rallying around the suburbs of Chicago, Geoffrey was an average youth who spent a good amount of time trying to figure out what to do with his life. After graduating from high school, Tabin was accepted at the prestigious Yale University. His early collegiate experiences were that of the typical freshman, meeting the co-eds, playing tennis, and enjoying the newfound freedom of being away from home. As he contemplated how to focus his energies in order to pass his exams, he came across the Michael

Ellenwood Curtis collection of mountaineering at the Yale Cross Campus Library. While reading about explorers like Tilman, Harrer, Messner, and Burton, Tabin learned that his problems paled in comparison to the hardships suffered by these men and their expeditions. His interest soon became an addiction, and Geoff would spend up to four hours a day engrossed in texts revealing the difficulties of mountain exploration and the tales of men who risked everything in the name adventure. Before long, he decided to undertake a quest of his own. During a trip to Europe with the Yale varsity tennis team, Tabin noticed an advertisement for a climbing week and leapt at the opportunity to venture into the Alps, just like his heroes. However, he soon found out the hard way that mountaineering was serious business. Through a communication error at the guide agency, Geoffrey ended up on the most strenuous tour, and soon realized he was in over his head. Not knowing how to put on his crampons or even tie into a rope earned him the moniker "Dumsheist" and made him quite a burden on the rest of the more-experienced group. Determined to stick it out, Tabin met up with a willing guide and continued his tour. Now hooked; going back to the US and trying to finish school would be far more challenging than any mountain peak.

Over the next few years at Yale, Geoffrey spent an inordinate amount of time training to be a climber. He and his roommate had a challenge going where they would put off sleeping until they had accumulated 100 points, given in increments based on a certain activity. Climbing a 5.10 route, for instance, would be worth ten points. Pull-ups and sit-ups would be worth a few points as well. "It was quite silly," recalled Tabin, "but it kept us entertained." By the time graduation rolled around, Tabin was a solid ball of muscle; ready to tackle any challenge sent his way. Despite his dedication to training, Geoff was able to keep up on his studies, earning himself Rhodes and Marshall Scholar-

ships. Delighted at the prospect of being able to study at Oxford University in England for free, he put off going to med school and took up studying philosophy for the next two years. With the freedom to go on extended trips every eight weeks, Tabin could explore the vast wilderness that is the Alps.

However, he would need a climbing partner to share in the madness. A chance encounter with a young Oxford man named Bob Shapiro would prove to be just the link he needed. Bob and Geoff spent the next two years engaging themselves in every outlandish endeavor their active imaginations could create. A helpful professor also turned them on to the A.C. Irvine Grant, an allotment set aside by the trustees at Oxford that enabled scholars to explore the world. The grant was established in memory of A.C. Irvine, who perished on the slopes of Mount Everest in 1924 while attempting to summit with mountaineering legend George Mallory. This was their meal ticket to a new realm of exploration and excitement. Perhaps one of the most memorable for Tabin was his journey to New Guinea to climb the Carstensz Pyramid, the highest peak in Australasia, and one of the seven summits. In addition to a general lack of formal mountaineering knowledge, the two men would need a permit to enter the Irian Jaya territory. A roadblock to most, Tabin and Shapiro saw the opportunity to get creative and find their way into the country anyway. Accompanied by a willing and able reporter named Sam Moses, who would be covering the expedition for *Sports Illustrated*, the three men set out to gain access to the primitive region. According to Geoff, "Shapiro is a logistical genius and was able to come up with some official looking paperwork written in Indonesian." Lucky for them, Moses' foreign language skills were slim. They convinced him

that they had permission to enter the area and climb the peak. The trip was now in full effect and they found an equally daring pilot name Leroy Kelm to fly them deep into Irian Jaya. With his small winged craft loaded to the gills, Leroy soared over dense jungle and towering mountain spires until a suitable landing spot was insight. The bird touched down without much trouble, but the strip was so slick with mud that the plane skated down the runway until it came to an abrupt stop moments before plunging off a cliff. An excited group of Dani tribesman witnessed the event and hooted with joy as the men emerged from their tiny capsule. The Dani are a good-natured Irian Jaya tribe that has lived in the region for centuries. Geoff speaks fondly of this curious group of native people and their willingness to help him and his mates on their journey. Enlisting the Dani's intimate knowledge of the jungle and amazingly strong work ethic proved essential to reaching the base of the mountain. After an incredible effort put forth by the team, they succeed in making a first ascent of an unexplored portion of Carstensz, and so began Tabin's quest to explore the world, interact with its people, and achieve seemingly impossible outcomes.

As Geoff grew his traveling resume at Oxford, he continued visiting distant locales with Shapiro and racking up an impressive amount of first-hand experience. Their voyages to Africa to scale the untouched faces of Mt. Kenya proved to be world news and gained them much notoriety that assisted their later sponsorship attempts. Tabin even joined the Oxford Dangerous Sports Club and learned alongside David Kirke, the father of bungee jumping.

After his graduation from Oxford University, Tabin enrolled at Harvard Medical School. Intent on pursuing his studies in medicine, Geoff limited his extreme adventures and spent most of his free time

playing around on the smaller rock features around town. However, he should of known that a burning desire to undertake great opportunities would not be snuffed out so easily.

Kangshung and Beyond

In 1981 Tabin received a call from Lou Reichardt asking him to join an expedition to Mount Everest in a first ascent attempt of the Eastern wall, the Kangshung Face. To even be invited by a mountaineer of Reichardt's stature was an honor, and Geoff couldn't possibly say no.

The Kangshung Face towers 11,000 feet over the glacier below bearing the same name. It had been looked upon by thousands of climbers throughout history and been deemed as an impossible route by which to summit the mountain. On George Mallory's expedition in 1924 he mused, "Other men, less wise, might attempt this way if they would, but, emphatically, it was not for us." So why would anyone want to undertake such a massive effort with little or no chance of success? To quote Mallory once more, "Because it's there." As Tabin's team inched their way up the face, they encountered numerous avalanche prone gullies and dodged the rockfall that peppered them with stone missiles nearly everyday. After several weeks of laying siege to the massif, the team decided that they could no longer safely proceed to the top. It would be two more years before Geoff got another crack at Everest.

After the expedition concluded and the party disbanded, Tabin returned to Harvard to pursue his studies. Nevertheless, the possibility of standing on top of the world via the last unconquered face still appealed to him. Through his contacts with former teammate, Jim Morrissey, Geoff was given another opportunity to achieve his goal, although there was still the mat-



The Kangshung Face

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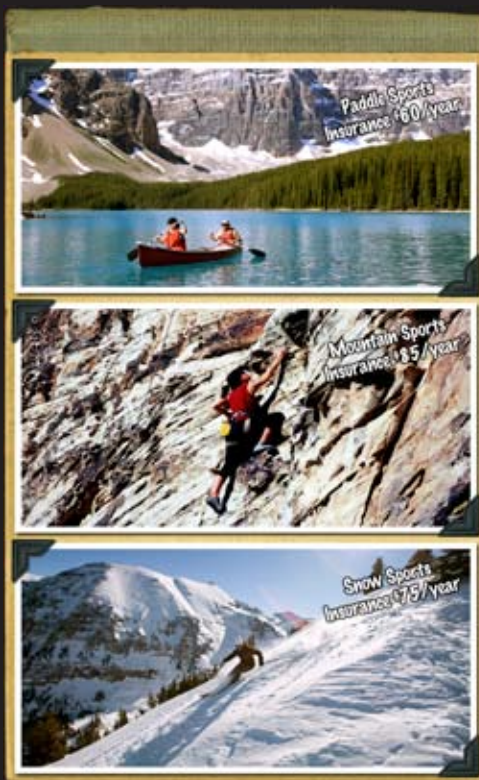


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ter of leaving school. One night while sorting through his gear, Tabin's phone rang; the voice on the other end was critical to say the least. "You're an idiot. You're a complete moron. I can't believe Harvard Medical School would ever accept anyone as stupid as you." Words of highly revered ophthalmologist, Dr. Michael Weidman, rattled through the receiver. "There is zero chance Harvard would ever let you take another leave of absence, but someone with half the intelligence to get in here should know that if you apply to do research, they will give you money and credit!" It happened that Weidman was also on the committee that approved leaves of absence, and also was highly interested in the effects of high altitude on the eye. Tabin once again had a golden ticket to do something he loved. With the help of Dr. Weidman, Geoff applied for a research grant that would pay for his trip to Everest and give him school credit, provided he study the link between retinal hemorrhaging and high altitude cerebral edema (HACE).

By the first of September, the team was on the face. Armed with prior knowledge of the proper route and advanced equipment to aid

them in the ascent, Tabin and company began the impossible, again. This trip, however, took a greater physical toll on Geoff and he was sidelined for a brief period while he recovered from the effects of altitude. The expedition was flowing smoothly for the most part and Tabin was beginning to understand the meaning of the Sherpa saying "Kay Guarnay." Which translates to "what to do when there is nothing to do." Basically, don't worry about things that you have no control over. Geoff and his team suffered a variety of maladies but kept their spirits high and their wits keen. Through sheer endurance and the ability to ignore pain, Kim Momb, Carlos Buhler, and Louis Reichardt summited Everest on October 8, 1983. The next day, George Lowe, Dan Reid, and Jay Cassell summited as well. Although Geoff never stood atop the roof of the world on this trip, he was undeniably a part of one of the greatest teams ever to step their crampon-clad feet on the mountain. In addition to the achievements of the expedition, Tabin had gathered enough research to compile a thorough report and eventually be published in one of the most esteemed ophthalmology publications in the field.

By 1988, Tabin would return to Everest for a third time. This expedition would strive to place the first American woman, Stacy Allison, on top of Chomolungma, "The Goddess Mother of the Earth." The route would be different, but the hardships the same. With excellent support and a dedicated team, barriers were broken and the expedition was successful, both for Stacy and Geoff. In fact, this expedition also succeeded in placing the first plastic lawn flamingo on the pinnacle of the globe. Through a bizarre conversation Tabin had on the plane with a persistent salesman, the team agreed to bring one of the decorative pink yard ornaments with them on their journey. To this day, flamingos still dot the landscapes of the small towns leading to the foot of Everest.

Realization and Determination

In nearly all of Geoff's voyages around the planet, he has encountered thousands of people and formed countless indelible relationships. He pours his heart and soul into every venture he pursues, and his latest enterprise is no different. After several journeys to the Himalaya, Tabin realized that the people of the countryside needed his help. More



Tabin (L) gives an examination

specifically, they needed help restoring their sight.

A Cataract is a disease that affects millions of people around the world, yet is also one of the most curable ailments of the eye. However, due to the lack of advanced medical care in countries like Nepal, tens of thousands of people suffer through an illness that need not. In the US, for instance, we have one ophthalmologist for every 18,000 people. In Nepal, they have only 37 ophthalmologists for 24 million people. A disparity so staggering that Tabin had to do something about it. So in 1994, Geoff joined forces with a gifted Nepalese eye surgeon named Sanduk Ruit to form the beginning of the Himalayan Cataract Project (HCP). Together they turned Ruit's Tilganga Eye Center in Katmandu into the best clinic in the country by training local doctors in advanced procedures. Using techniques born in the Western world, Ruit and Tabin found a way to deliver the much-needed surgery to the people of Nepal, all for around twenty dollars per operation. Using an advanced intraocular lens, the two surgeons can perform a fifteen-minute procedure that restores vision back to nearly 20/20. It doesn't take much to imagine how powerful it is to give someone back their lost sight and make them a productive part of society again. The HCP has grown from its humble beginning in Nepal to become a model organization that helps reduce the amount of people affected with Cataract disease by thousands every year.

Talking with Tabin in our second interview while poaching the hot tub at Snowbird's Cliff Lodge revealed the next stages of his master plan. Along with the help of a University of Utah surgeon named Alan Crandall, Geoff is expanding his sphere of sight to places like Nairobi, Ghana and Rwanda in Africa. The two have made several trips to these locations and performed life-changing surgeries that restore vision and prosperity to the Dark Continent. Joining Tabin and Crandall is the talented and energetic Mike Feilmeier, who is currently participating in a fellowship with the Division of International Ophthalmology at the U. His youthful outlook and ability to interact with the people he helps make him a valued part of the team. By the time this article is published, Tabin will have just returned from a stint in Africa where he will have performed twenty corneal transplants and numerous corrective surgeries for the locals.

While simultaneously heading up the Division of International Ophthalmology at the University of Utah and The Himalayan Cataract Project, Tabin also spends time at the VA Hospital in Salt Lake City. I got the chance to visit him during one of his afternoon clinics and see firsthand how he deals with his patients. The entire time Geoff was relaxed and made everyone feel at ease. We even got a chance to joke around and play a rousing game of HORSE involving an empty tic-tac box and a garbage pail with the resident doctors after the clinic. Proof that you can still have fun, even at a hospital.

If that seems like a long list of obligations, tack on the work he does at the Moran Outreach Clinic and People's Health Clinic in Park City.

With all of his professional projects in Utah and his trips abroad, Geoff still finds time to be a family man. He currently lives in Park City with his wife and children, where they go on small adventures in the local mountains.

If you would like to learn more about Geoff and his adventures, take a look at his book, *Blind Corners*. It is full of exciting stories of his travels around the globe and gives detailed accounts of his encounters with indigenous cultures from all over the world. Or, just find him on the chairlift at the Canyons or



Celebrating successful surgeries

Snowbird and ask him. He'll be happy to share his tales of adventure and will no doubt leave you spellbound.



Sean is living his dreams in Utah. He wants to continue this lifestyle and figure out how to make a living off it. So far he's doing alright.

Special thanks to Jenny Wilson and Tina at the Moran Eye Center for helping me track down Tabin and get to see what he is really like.

For more information on the Himalayan Cataract Project, go to www.cureblindness.org



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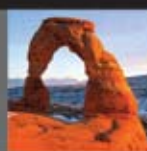
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Solo Down the Middle Fork of the Salmon

Story and Photos by Lance Clark

In 2009 I won the lottery. The ticket cost \$6 and I won the right to pay \$700 for a 5 day camping trip. The lottery was held by the Forest Service, and winners got a permit to float the Middle Fork of the Salmon River.

The Middle Fork winds for about 100 miles through the heart of the Frank Church- River of No Return Wilderness. It rumbles past hot springs, wild-life and sandy beaches. The main attraction to most people is the whitewater. The rapids are not particularly life threatening in terms of difficulty but they are nearly continuous and technically challenging.

I had been entering the lottery in one way or another since I became legal to do so. The odds are long. For prime dates in June and July up to 350 people a day throw in their money for a chance to float. Typically 4 permits are issued per day. If you live to be 95 and enter the lotto every year you might get to float- once.

If you are granted one of the coveted permits you can take along up to 23 of your best friends. Permit holders often find themselves inexplicably popular.

I did not draw a prime date. Each lotto form has 4 spots for launch dates. If your name is drawn and your first date is already gone they try to give you your second choice, and so on down the line. My last choice was August 22. I received August 22. Not that I was upset. Any time your number comes up you are lucky.

Months later I stood on the precipice. At the launch there is literally a precipice. The river is about 300 feet below the parking lot and a huge wooden ramp slides boats down to the launch eddy. The ranger was kind enough to zoom through the mandatory safety and zero impact spiel. She issued my permit and campsite and helped me lower my boat to the river.

It was about 11 am by the time I got all rigged and pulled out. The only other people at the launch had rigged the night before and gotten a leisurely start of things. I was about 5 minutes behind them. I began to wonder if I was doing things wrong. They had 3 people in 2 rafts and an inflatable kayak. Each raft was heaped with gear and the kayak looked pretty stuffed too.

The ranger had checked my gear and approved, I had the big 6 required items plus food, shelter and safety gear along with enough clothes and backup gear for 7 days. I only planned to spend 4. The group in front of me could have lasted a good month.

As I pulled around the first bend I noticed two things. The fish were jumping everywhere in a feeding frenzy and one of the rafts that had launched 5 minutes ago was already firmly wedged between a rock and a hard place. I was forced to eddy out already. I debated internally over fishing a little or helping. Since I was alone I decided to make a karma deposit.

Several friends, family members and co-workers had been committed to the trip at one time. My plans for the trip seemed less appealing to them as the date

neared. I wanted to launch at Boundary Creek which meant go light- no cooler, one small boat and inflatable kayaks. No fires, no amenities and no propane fired showers- backpacking without the walking. The crowd slowly thinned and left me the lone participant. I'm normally a social guy, but if you need a propane shower to enjoy the river you can win your own damn lottery.

Before I could make my way down the shore the party barge had been extricated and was lumbering on. I slipped through a side slot and followed. The gauge at the launch read 1.89 feet.

Within a few miles it was clear that going light was big wisdom. The barges scraped and banged their way downstream. I straddled and slipped. That's not to say I didn't hit anything, but I never had to do more than bounce a bit and push with an oar to get un-wedged. My newfound friends were going to have to keep the z-drag kit out.

Since I was alone and needed to make good time to finish in four days I soon said goodbye and started rowing. Around lunch time I decided to stop in a big eddy where the river deepened and swirled between two cliffs. While I ate my bagel sandwich I decided to try my new fly rod out.

I tied on a red stimulator and stripped some line. As I prepared to cast my fly inadvertently fell off of my raft and I caught my first fish. I took a picture of the 12' cutthroat and released it. The whole river is

catch and release only.

I made an actual cast, being careful to keep my fly out of the water until I was ready, and landed another nice cutthroat. For 20 minutes I fished adjoining eddies and pulled in fish on nearly every cast.

I finally cast into the current and had the biggest strike yet. I fought him for about a minute. I never had a good look through the foam and swirls that the rapids above sent down. Eventually he won and I went back to the smaller eddy fish.

I still hooked a fish about every other cast but I was having trouble landing them. The fish were aggressive and the water is crystal clear so setting a good hook was as easy as it gets. I just couldn't get them to my boat.

I gave up and pulled in my line to push down the river. It was getting late and I had to go 32 miles today to reach my assigned camp.

I navigated several small to medium rapids, carefully trying to track my progress on the Forest Service issued map. I also had a GPS along that a friend of mine that guided the river had loaded with waypoints. I liked the idea of doing some discovery for myself and stuck to the map so I didn't accidentally float in over my head. A few more miles in I ran a small unnamed ledge drop. It didn't seem worth scouting and went smoothly.

I did worry a bit though. If that ledge wasn't on the map I wondered what Velvet Falls would be like. I had seen you tube videos and it looked like it could get nasty if run poorly. Then I came to another distinct rapid. Again, it didn't seem like I needed to scout it and the run went smoothly. It was a fun S curve with a drop at the top.

I was starting to worry about time and light at this point. I needed to get down river and I was not making the time I needed with the two big rapids of the day looming. I finally passed a group of rafters set-

ting up camp.

I subtly asked what camps they had been assigned, to ascertain my whereabouts, and was shocked to hear they drew Pistol Creek. I asked where Pistol Rapid was and they smiled, you just ran it. I looked at the map and reality dawned on me. I had run Velvet and Pistol already. The pictures and videos I had seen were all at much higher flows and the rapids get significantly easier at low flow.

I was also relieved to find that I was making good time and might be able to fish a little before getting to camp. I pulled over a few times and the fishing was good everywhere I tried. The entire river was brimming with big, aggressive and very hungry fish. I still couldn't land them but since it was catch and release I figured it saved me an extra step.

A few more miles along I came around a corner and spotted the oddest sight of the trip. A completely nude lady was squatting on a beach illegally dropping a deuce. She seemed embarrassed, I seemed very embarrassed. Fortunately the river ended it by taking me around the next bend. Her other half was blissfully fishing an eddy and singing Bob Marley to himself. I



waved as though nothing was amiss. He waved because nothing was amiss.

I stopped at Indian Creek launch site and re-filled my water bottles. The ranger was again friendly and helpful. I fished a little mid stream and managed to hook and not land a whole bunch of fish again. An outfitter web site bragged that on their trips an experienced angler could bag up to 50 fish a day. I'm pretty sure that on the Middle Fork a small child with a Barbie pole could bag 50 fish a day.

After negotiating a few more rapids and catching a few more fish I pulled into Sunflower Flats campsite. The main redeeming quality of the campsite was not the beach (tiny) or the tent sites

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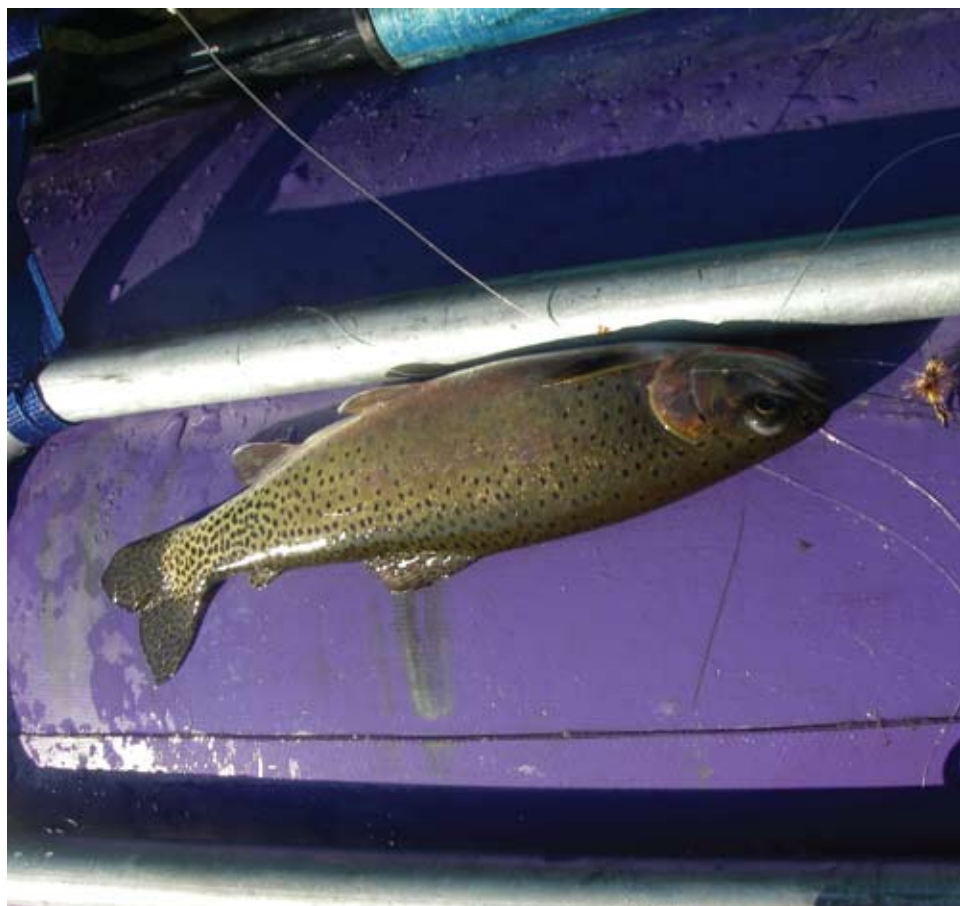
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(rocky) or the view (standard) it was the shower (hot). A natural hot spring had been corralled into a series of pools which finally culminated in a chute over a cliff. Right on the banks of the river you could catch a hot shower, or a fish, or both at the same time. I hooked a few more fish and settled in a pool at dark with my dinner, which was not a fish.

The next morning the shower and pools made getting up much more bearable. I realized that my only clock was on the GPS and that I probably didn't have enough batteries to justify checking the time. I also realized it didn't matter what time it was. If it was light enough to float I was going to float. When it got dark I went to sleep.

I also decided to try a yellow fly instead of a red one. The red one was coming untied from all of the abuse the fish were giving it. When I clipped it off I discovered why I was suddenly inept at landing fish. The hook was bent. My monster fish had literally bent the hook straight enough to get off. All of his smaller brethren that followed had reaped the reward of his girth. I was soon landing fish again.

The next three days blended together a bit, I slept at a beach or hot spring or both every night. I swam when it was hot and fished until I was literally tired of catching so many fish. I rowed all day every day and ate lunch on the boat in the calmer stretches.

I fell into a comfortable rhythm of sleeping and floating. As the river became more familiar I made good time and could follow my position on a map with pretty good accuracy. I scouted when necessary, sometimes when it was not, and thoroughly enjoyed myself. The rapids continued to be technically challenging, but not particularly dangerous or intimidating.

I saw as much wildlife as I had on most trips to Yellowstone. The canyon just got deeper and more dramatic. I couldn't imagine a better way to see the wilderness than from a raft. I shared my final camp with an entire colony of Chukars and caught fish by the reflected light of towering walls.

On the last day I decided to forgo fishing altogether as thanks to the many fish that had foolishly bit my flies for days. I filled the day with a few short hikes and what passes for photography.

The final day of rapids proved to be fairly straightforward, but still fun. In all I had covered 98 miles and averaged about one spoken word per mile. I saw more sheep than people. I do believe I will put in exclusively for late season dates next year.



Lance works full time in the outdoors and enjoys every minute of it. He is currently busy teaching his 3 year old daughter Kaya to enjoy the finer things in life.

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Lottery Information for the Middle Fork of the Salmon

By the Numbers

- \$6 - Application fee per river.
- 4 - Number of launch dates you can select per river
- 4 - Number of rivers you can apply for
- 15,798 - Number of 2009 lottery applications
- 1:325 - Odds of winning a prime season Middle Fork permit
- 1:5 - Odds of winning a late season permit
- 4 July - 'Best odds' prime season lottery date
- 2.0 River - Level most people stop floating or fly in
- 6.0+ - Hazardous river level
- 8.0 - Most commercial outfitters cancel trips
- \$4 - Fee per person per day to float
- 15 - Cancellation days available from Aug 1- Sept 3 in 2009
- 6-8 - Maximum number of days you can spend on the river

Feb 1 - Lottery results are typically emailed out

May 28 - Permit season begins

Aug 14 - Approximate start of 'late season' odds

Sept 3 - Permit season ends

Oct 1, 2011 - Lottery applications begin

Several changes are scheduled for the 2010 lottery including these interesting ones

- Each applicant has to create an account and pay separately.
- User fees can be paid online at the lottery site.
- Paper applications will not be accepted.
- Cancellations will be posted online.
- You can reserve open dates online.

Calendar

Dec 1 - Lottery opens at www.recreation.gov

Jan 31 - Lottery closes

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EDITOR'S CHOICE River Gear for 2010

Whether you're planning on a multi-day expedition or just a few hours on the local river, the amount of stuff you can bring is always limited- make your choices well. Here's some of our favorite gear that is tested and true.



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www.baladeo.com/accueil.php?langue=en

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You can only paddle one boat at a time, so why not get the boat that will suit the most conditions? The Dagger Mamba is our choice for the best all-around boat, a versatile rig that can handle a wide range of whitewater. Available in three sizes from 7.5 to 8.5 the Mamba is suited to paddlers of all sizes, is easy to roll, and has an excellent hull speed. Great stability and control also give you the confidence to tackle all conditions, from big whitewater to rapids for the beginner. A completely adjustable fit system ensures precise control and comfort from the cockpit. 48 lbs. in the 7.5 size (7'7").

Around \$950 www.dagger.com



CHACO Z-1 PRO SANDALS

Another crucial piece of gear- you've got to protect your feet, and as anything on the river, not something you really want to lose in a rapid. The Chaco Z-1 has long been one of our favorite river sandals, with a secure fit, great grip on the soles, and most importantly- comfortable when wet or dry for long periods of time. A snug fit is achieved through a 360 degree adjustable strap system with heavy duty nylon webbing- designed to hold on to you foot in even the roughest conditions. An open toe design allows for neoprene booties for colder water. The foot bed features Chaco's "Bio-Centric" fit system, designed by certified pedorthists for proper fit, comfort and support. The Vibram sole is extremely durable and grippy in a variety of conditions.

From \$105 www.chacousa.com



RUFF WEAR BIG EDDY FLOAT COAT

Don't forget about the safety of your best friend on the river; outfit your pooch in the Ruff Wear Big Eddy canine lifejacket. Ideal for dogs that are aggressive swimmers, or like to play in fast and rough water, the Big Eddy features an abrasion resistant outer nylon shell with a fine weave liner, contoured neck straps, and a low profile, heavy-duty grab handle to lift your dog out of the water. PVC-free buoyancy cells float your dog in a natural horizontal swimming position. 4 sizes, 2 colors.

\$75 www.ruffwear.com



EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

BICYCLE EVENTS—TIME TO RIDE!

Even though there is still plenty of good skiing to be had up north, it's time to start thinking about spending some time on the bike, it's prime to get going with some of these So. Utah events:

March 27th, the Tour de St. George Spring Ride offers three distances of 30, 65 and 100 miles- all fully supported. The ride tours in and around St. George, and for the 100 mile option, offers nearly 6000 feet of climbing.

April 3rd- The mountain biking race season kicks into high gear with the Cholla Challenge in St. George. Many entry classes are available and great racing on a classic desert singletrack course. Part of the Intermountain Cup Series.

April 10th- Spokes for Hope- southern Utah's only Women's only century ride. 4 distance options of 30, 50, 70 and 94 miles. Fully supported. For more info go www.spingeeks.com

INTERMOUNTAIN CUP MOUNTAIN BIKE RACING 2010

Utah's oldest and most prestigious series returns for a full slate of racing through the summer. Prepare to get crushed racing or just race for fun! Categories for everyone.

4/3 Cholla Challenge- St. George
5/1- Five Mile Pass- Lehi
5/15 Sundance Spin- Sundance
5/22 Hammerfest at the Hollow-Soldier Hollow
5/31 Stan Crane Memorial-Draper
6/12- Pedalfest- Deer Valley
6/19 Sherwood Hills-Cache Valley
6/26- Taming the Tetons- Teton Village, WY
7/3 The Mountain Bout- Snowbird
7/10 Chris Allaire Memorial- Solitude
8/7- Rock the Canyons- Canyons Resort, Park City
www.intermountaincup.com

GRAN FONDO MOAB, MAY 1ST, 2ND

A classic road ride in the old Italian cycling tradition, the Gran Fondo will climb (and descend) the spectacular LaSal loop around starting and ending in Moab. Not designed as a true race, but with a mass start expect some riders to put the hammer down, while others will enjoy a leisurely (with 5500 feet of climbing) ride through the 60 mile loop. All riders will be timed, with results broken into age groups and overall. This is one of the classic road riding routes in the west, with spectacular scenery of the Canyonlands throughout the ride.

www.poisonspiderbicycles.com/granfondomoab



SUBARU WORLD FREESKIING CHAMPIONSHIPS RETURN TO SNOWBIRD MARCH 17-20

The world's top freeskiers return to Snowbird in March to challenge themselves against the slopes of Baldy, the premier and most challenging venue of the 6 stop season tour. Local skier Angel Collinson, currently third in the season standings will make a push for the title in front of the home crowd along with a full roster of the top freeskiers as they charge down challenging lines, with some big air to boot in pursuit of fame and prize money!

The high-energy event always draws a large crowd to the base of Baldy, spectators are required to purchase a lift ticket and have ski or snowboard gear to access the on hill spectator venue. For more information go to www.snowbird.com or www.freeskiingworldtour.com





The Panguitch Desperado Dual

Bold Outlaws Traveling The Frontier Of the Old West
Presented by Red Rock Bicycle Co.

August 21, 2010

www.desperadodual.com

- 🚲 100 and 200 mile option
- 🚲 Fully supported ride with rest stops, lunch, & sag
- 🚲 Located in Panguitch, UT · Utah's Color Country!



April 10, 2010

* Full support ride with rest stops, lunch and sag

* 4 Mileage Options: 30, 50, 70 or 100

* Charity ride to benefit the Dove Center

Dust your bike off, gather your friends and take advantage of the beautiful weather in Southern Utah.

Join us for an unique women's only ride.

To Register or For More Info Visit www.spokes4hopeutah.com



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- 🚲 Fully supported century ride with rest stops, lunch, & sag
- 🚲 8:00am @ the new St. George Town Square
- 🚲 100, 65, & 30 mile option

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Fall Event - Oct 16, 2010

www.tourdestgeorge.com



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Mon-Fri 9am-7pm
Saturday 9am-6pm
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www.redrockbicycle.com






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SPRING GRUV RETURNS TO THE CANYONS

For ten days, March 26th – April 4th, The Canyons will be the center of activity in Park City, Utah. This is the 3rd annual Spring Gruv, a festival of music, entertainment and on-mountain events.

The festivities kick off on Saturday, March 27th with the annual and ever hilarious Pond Skimming Contest and a live concert by *Big Head Todd & The Monsters*. On Sunday, March 28th, the Canis Lupus Challenge will take place, followed by ska and rock favorites, *Fishbone*.

Spring Gruv continues the next weekend on Saturday, April 3rd with the Red Bull 1976 Games, followed by a free concert by *Robert Randolph & The Family Band* in the Resort Village. Sunday, April 4th The Canyons will host the final Miller Lite Downhill Dish Series and a concert by *The Soulistics*. And, in The Canyons' music tradition, all concerts will be free and open to the public.

For additional information on all Spring Gruv events, lodging packages, videos and a full calendar, visit www.SpringGruv.com

FRUITA FAT TIRE FESTIVAL APRIL 29- MAY 2ND

One of the oldest and biggest fat tire festivals in the country celebrates its 15th year with a huge party for the fat-tire set in Fruita. A full calendar of events including lots of rides, live music, a bike expo, clunker crit, a beer tent, and big parties both Friday and Saturday night to keep the week-end hopping.

The area around Fruita has hundreds of miles of world class mountain bike trails across the high desert and red rock canyon country of western Colorado. If you haven't had the chance to check out this festival, this should be the year. The Fruita/ Grand Junction area has all services, lodging and camping available.

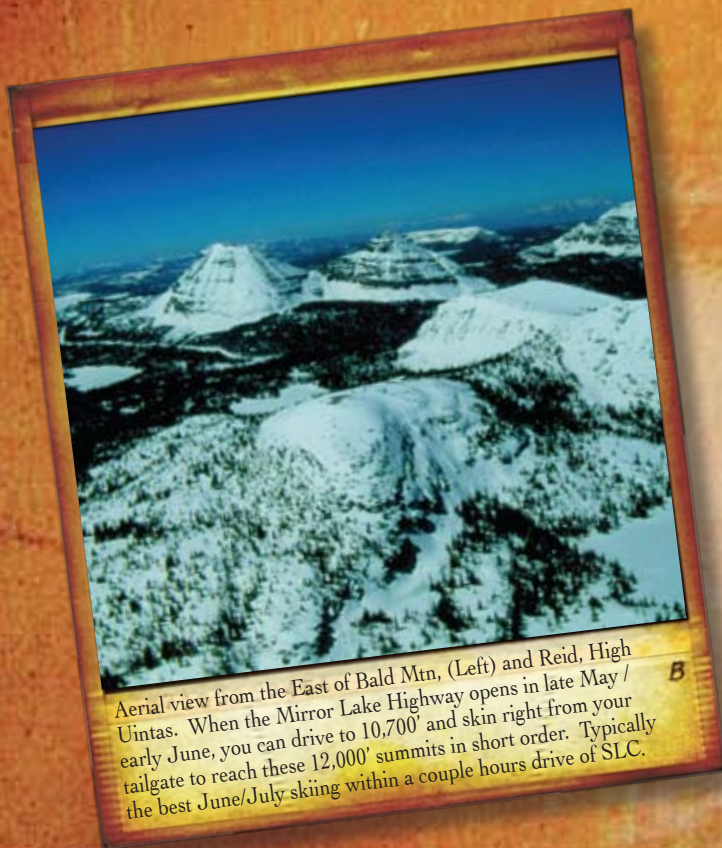
www.fruitamountainbike.com

Spring Skiing in Utah

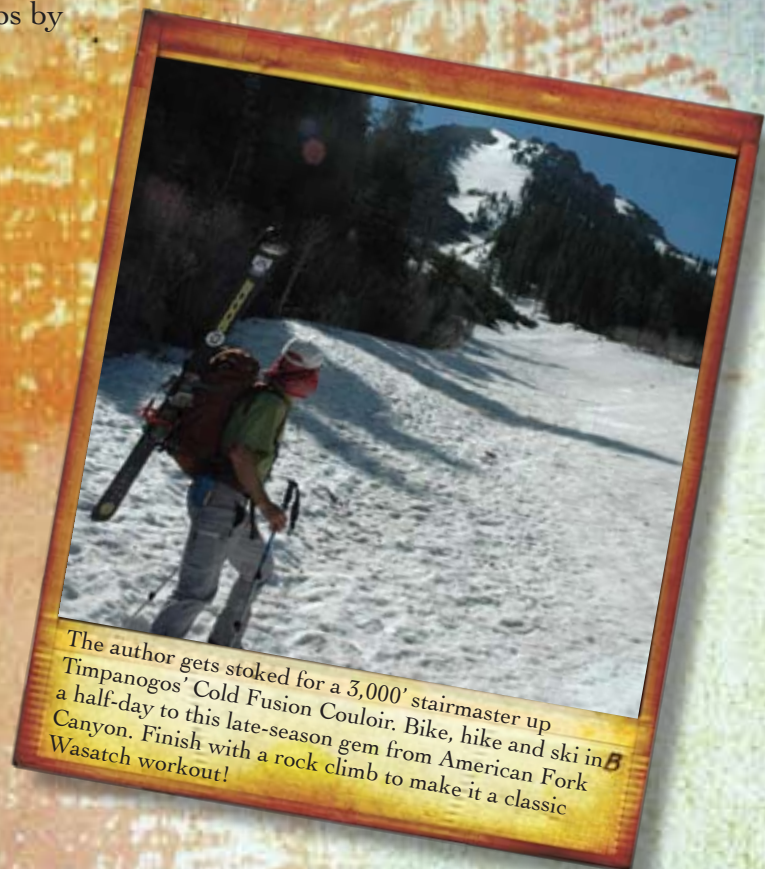
An Endless Variety

Text and Photos by
Tyson Bradley

The long days and cool nights are a skiers dream all across the state. The high country is packed with snow, access is easier, and the skiing is steep an long on the terrain covered with the smoothest of snow- corn! Here- some famous and some obscure lines...-ed.



Aerial view from the East of Bald Mtn, (Left) and Reid, High Uintas. When the Mirror Lake Highway opens in late May / early June, you can drive to 10,700' and skin right from your tailgate to reach these 12,000' summits in short order. Typically the best June/July skiing within a couple hours drive of SLC.



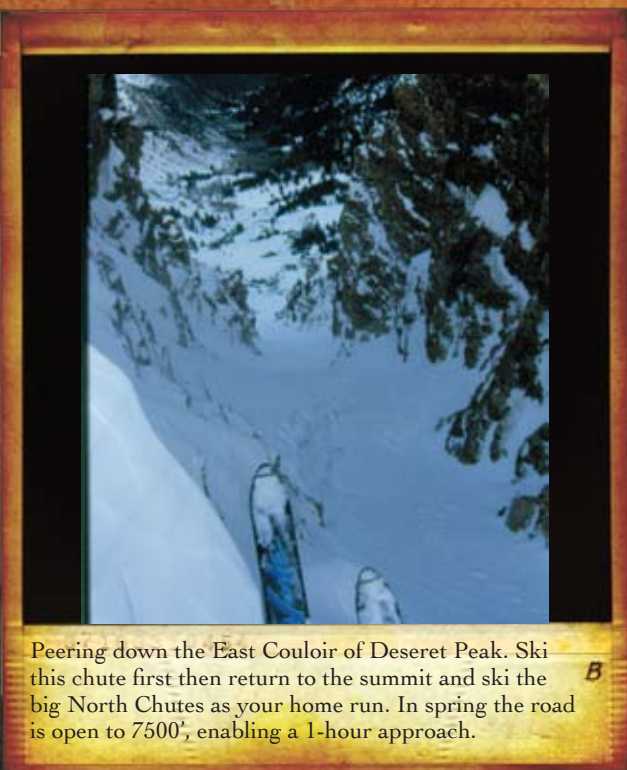
The author gets stoked for a 3,000' stairmaster up Timpanogos' Cold Fusion Couloir. Bike, hike and ski in a half-day to this late-season gem from American Fork Canyon. Finish with a rock climb to make it a classic Wasatch workout!



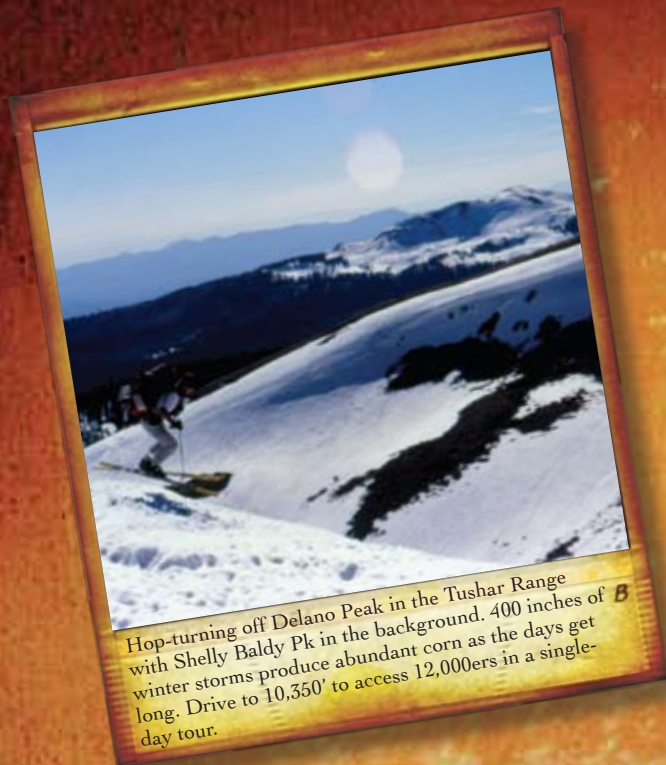
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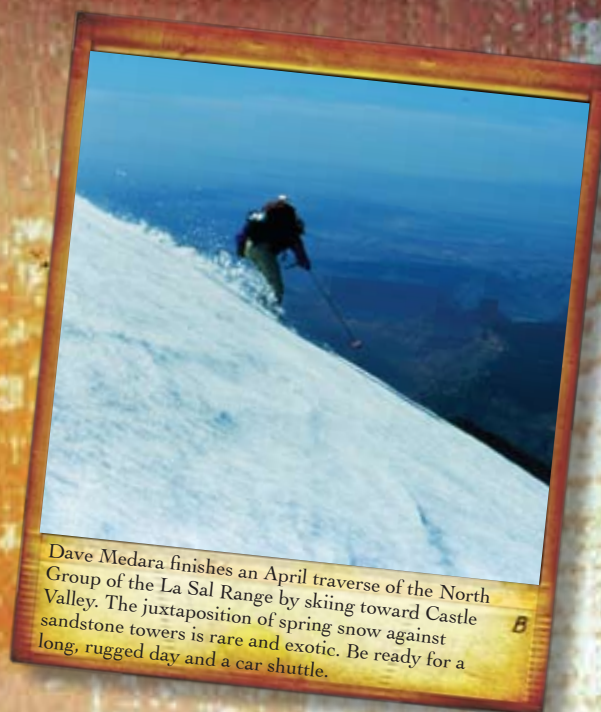
www.UtahMountainAdventures.com



Peering down the East Couloir of Deseret Peak. Ski this chute first then return to the summit and ski the big North Chutes as your home run. In spring the road is open to 7500', enabling a 1-hour approach.



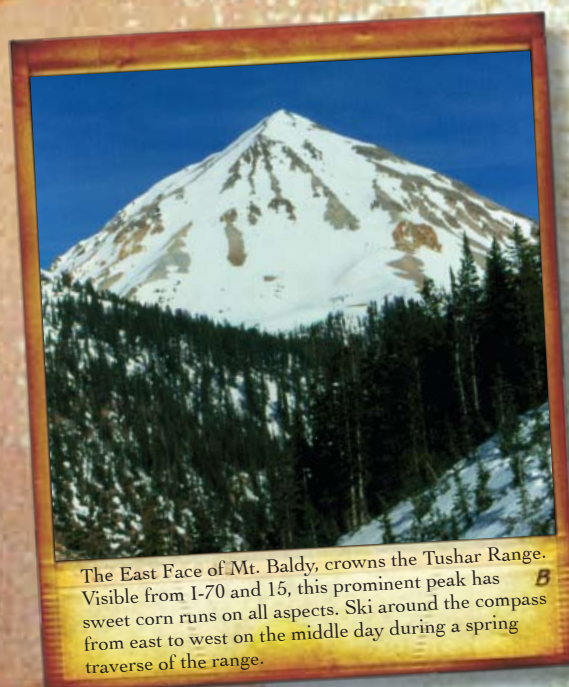
Hop-turning off Delano Peak in the Tushar Range with Shelly Baldy Pk in the background. 400 inches of winter storms produce abundant corn as the days get long. Drive to 10,350' to access 12,000ers in a single-day tour. **B**



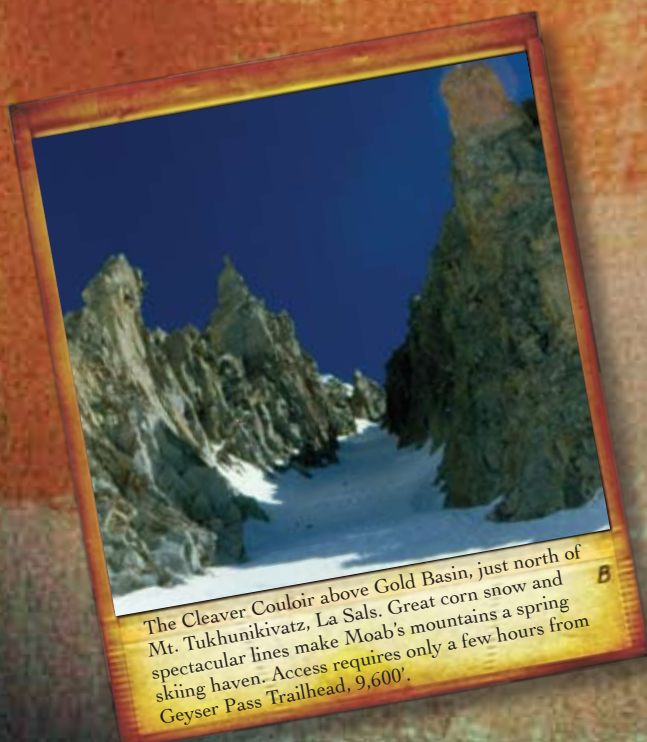
Dave Medara finishes an April traverse of the North Group of the La Sal Range by skiing toward Castle Valley. The juxtaposition of spring snow against sandstone towers is rare and exotic. Be ready for a long, rugged day and a car shuttle. **B**



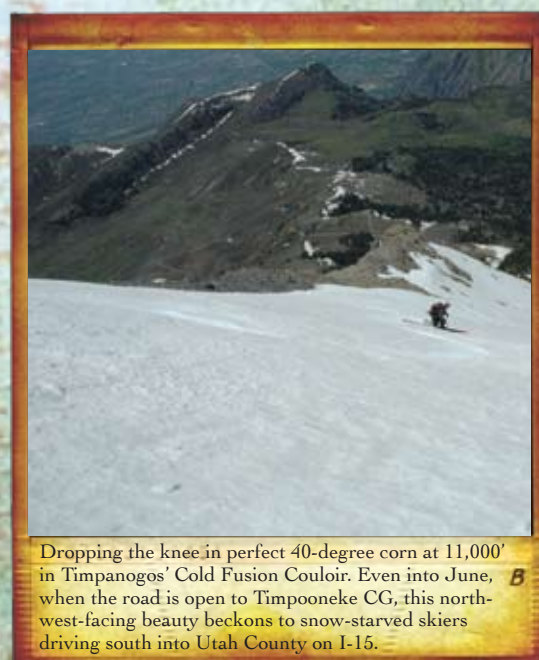
Dave Braun cuts up the north face of 12,000' Mt. Belknap, with the Tushar divide below. A three day south-to-north traverse enables skiers to shred this and prominent Mt. Baldy, where 2,500' runs drop from all 4 aspects. **B**



The East Face of Mt. Baldy, crowns the Tushar Range. Visible from I-70 and 15, this prominent peak has sweet corn runs on all aspects. Ski around the compass from east to west on the middle day during a spring traverse of the range. **B**



The Cleaver Couloir above Gold Basin, just north of Mt. Tukhunikivatz, La Sals. Great corn snow and spectacular lines make Moab's mountains a spring skiing haven. Access requires only a few hours from Geyser Pass Trailhead, 9,600'. **B**



Dropping the knee in perfect 40-degree corn at 11,000' in Timpanogos' Cold Fusion Couloir. Even into June, when the road is open to Timpooneke CG, this north-west-facing beauty beckons to snow-starved skiers driving south into Utah County on I-15. **B**



Tyson is the lead guide for Utah Mountain Adventures and is the author of *Backcountry Skiing In Utah* (Falcon 2003). He wrote about skiing Utah's Biggest Lines in our winter '09 issue. **B**

Paddling Utah's Small Streams

Story and Photos
by Dan Hill



Scott Peters, my friend and college roommate, held on to the wall with white fingertips straining against the slippery wet sandstone. My paddle was jammed under a boulder in the frothy foam just at the edge of the precipice, and we both looked over the edge into the dim chasm, misty with the spray of white water. The roar made conversation nearly impossible, but there was no need to talk. We were committed, and sooner or later we would need to let go. In my mind I kept telling myself “You looked at this stretch from the canyon rim and there were no waterfalls”, but there was still a gnawing fear that we’d missed something.

I felt Scott punch my life vest and I turned to see him grinning. We nodded at each other and simultaneously released our grip from the mossy cliff face, and plunged into the gorge. In actuality, it was no gorge, but a slot canyon, at times no wider than the double bladed paddles we carried. The sedate little creek that we had been following for miles down the wide, meandering canyon, now turned furious at being contained. It bucked and fumed and suddenly dropped a half dozen feet at a time.

It was so narrow that we soon abandoned paddling. The creek spurt around giant boulders and crashed against the walls as its course changed direction. The only way to navigate was to push and punt against the walls and rocks as they flew past. It gave the effect of hand-to-hand combat with both of us fending ourselves off of the spurs of mossy sandstone as they hurled themselves at us. The clatter of the paddles hitting the sides of the wall was barely audible above the din of cascading water.

It was impossible to rest for even a second. Left, then right, then left again, the obstacles came at us. Like a metronome, we struck a regular rhythm as we fended one off and prepared for another. For the next two miles of river, we rode the gauntlet of water and adrenaline until, exhausted, we were spit out at the bottom of tiny, isolated Boulder Creek. Ahead lay

the Escalante River, and the point where the free ride would end. From there it would be a long hike back to the road and civilization.

—
The setting sun was just touching the tip of the pines as Connor and I pulled the boat up on the grassy bank. We had been on the gentle current of the Price River only a few hours, but this was the perfect spot to camp. That and the sight of the browns rising for evening mayfly hatches clinched the deal. This stretch always reminded me of a mini Madison River. The ancient course meandered in great ox-bows, deep and green, interrupted regularly with gravel bars and thick banks of aquatic vegetation.

It had been a sedate, late afternoon run down to this point with my oldest son, now eleven. This was his first trip down a river, and we practiced the various strokes he would need the next day, when the water became more challenging. We were carried eastward into the hills, and as the canyon enveloped us, we began to tune into the new sounds of the environment.

The south-facing side of the canyon we followed was a rugged, slanting cliff strewn with oak and sage, but we had pulled up on the North facing side and the pines crowded thickly behind the green meadows bordering the river. Grasses to our waists rustled as we dragged the boat to the base of the nearest pine, with huge overhanging limbs, heavy with pinecones. Without unpacking, we grabbed our rods and set out to catch that magic last half hour of fly fishing before dark. That night, there would be stories and laughter as we roasted meat on sticks over the fire and baked reflector oven biscuits. Then we’d drift off to sleep listening to the gentle gurgle of rolling water.

—
I had only been married a month and this was the first camping trip we’d ever been on together. It was spring, and the Manti LaSal’s were bursting with colors of every hue. Winter snows were melting in the early June sun, and the tiny creeks were swollen and

murky with run-off. Between the sporadic light rain that had plagued us for two days, we ventured out early one afternoon on a dirt road into a lush valley hemmed in by dense pine and aspen forests. At the base of the shallow canyon was a creek no more than six feet wide, but with the augmented flow, it looked deep and inviting.

I stopped the truck and looked to where the river flowed. A mile or so down the canyon it banked to the right and disappeared behind the gentle slope of the hillside. “I wonder where that goes”. I said with no particular suggestive tone. “Let’s go find out.” was Christie’s reply, and I knew I had married well. Within fifteen minutes, we had readied the small inflatable kayak I carry for just such purposes. With no plan, and full of curiosity, we put in and let the flow carry us into the unknown.

We followed the nameless stream for an hour through beautiful and empty meadows and pasture land. Soon, the rain clouds again covered the sun and we began looking for a spot to end our journey and begin hiking back. Our course had described a slow bending arc of river, and I figured that we could cut across through the forest and intersect the dirt road we had been on.

Preoccupied with looking for a place to pull out, I failed to notice the sudden descent and nearly 90 degree right turn of the flow. We picked up speed too quickly to arrest and as I tried to pull the nose into the next leg of the rapid, we were both swept out of the boat by the over-hanging willows. Instantly submerged in the icy water, we desperately grasped at the passing branches to pull ourselves out. The banks were steep, but the creek was only waist deep, and we soon were shivering in the grass. “Now what?” my new bride asked, a tinge of challenge in her tone. The day was growing cool and we were now soaked with evening coming on.

Ever-prepared, I pulled out my emergency pack and felt for the lighter. It was there, dry and ready



for use. Within a few minutes, we stood in a forest glade, stripped down to our skivvies, with our clothes steaming on a willow rack next to a roaring fire. We laughed and talked about our future together as we nibbled rations and warmed ourselves in preparation for a hike that would get us back to the road in darkness. We still giggle about the experience today.

Some of my fondest memories have been directly related to the small streams of Utah. Whether it was kayak runs down stretches of the Logan or Blacksmith Fork Rivers while in college, weekend fly fishing adventures with friends on Ashley Creek or the Duchesne, or multi-day excursions on the Escalante, Sevier, or Fremont, my life has always been drawn to these capillaries that feed the great rivers of the

Southwest.

Utah has a huge variety of environments and elevations, and across all these terrains, the water flows. From the upper Uintah River, which descends from frigid, craggy canyons above 10,000 feet, to the Virgin River winding through sweltering deserts just 2500 feet above sea level, this state contains several major drainages in very different surroundings, ultimately ending in the Colorado River, Great Salt Lake, or other basins like the Sevier.

Precipitation in Utah is uncommonly localized. Huge areas like the Great Basin covering most of the state's western border, as well as the Colorado Plateau in the Southeast receive less than ten inches of water per year and some average around six.

These vast tracts of arid land, dry as they are, have one thing going for them. This is the fact that

over Utah's geological history, tectonic action has wreaked havoc with Earth's crust, throwing up several gigantic mountain ranges. The Wasatch, Uinta, Boulder, Manti LaSal, Deep Creek and half a dozen others throughout the state are the sole reason for the scores of life-giving springs, creeks and rivers distributed across an otherwise barren landscape. Some of these mountain regions receive over 40 inches of water per year, most of it as snow, making long term storage and distribution of the precious resource possible.

The result is that Utah boasts hundreds of year-round small to medium creeks, some running for just a mile or two before being swallowed up in another larger stream, and others which meander hundreds of miles, beginning in high alpine meadows and ending in lowland deserts. Many of these are in remote locations, begging to be explored. Scores are navigable by boat, especially in early summer when water levels are higher. For the dauntless adventurer, these small capillaries of Utah's rivers offer boundless adventure and occasionally the chance to cast a fly over fish that have never seen an artificial lure.

With the advent of the Internet, there is a wealth of shared information regarding practically every nook and cranny of our state. One can usually find dependable intel regarding stream flow rates, fish species, terrain, and whether or not a stream is runnable by boat. Quite often though, it is absent from any searches. This could mean it's not well known, not worth pursuing, or it is and someone is keeping it a secret. One thing to remember is that even well known streams, like the Price or Strawberry, have large sections which are completely cut off from roads. Whether accessed by boat, or a great deal of walking, they're always worth the effort.

When scouting for a new creek to kayak, I look for several things. Factors like river flow, terrain, accessibility, clarity, change in elevation, and many others can help determine if there are hazards, whether the fishing might be good, or whether one can hike out if needed. While a hard shell kayak works well in bigger creeks, I have become fond of inflatables for situations where the river is unfamiliar. Many are the times I have enjoyed a few miles of runnable water, and then come to a section that requires portaging or abandonment of the endeavor. This is often in rough terrain where dragging a rigid kayak is nearly impossible. However, with a good inflatable, I can, in minutes be out of the water, and hiking with the craft on my back, none the worse for wear. I usually carry set of backpack shoulder straps and extra webbing in my boat bag for such purposes.

Speaking of boat bags, let me also emphasize that special care must be taken when venturing onto smaller, unfamiliar waters. Little streams are highly affected by runoff from year to year. It's a common sight to run a stream in April and then again in July and find two completely different rivers. New bars, deadfall trees, log jams, beaver dams, or alterations in the entire river channel are just some of the hazards which water trekkers face. While a few precautions can avoid serious physical injury, it is also common to lose equipment. A sedate stream can lull one into a sense of ease, where fly boxes, sunglasses, and even rods can be set in one's lap. Within seconds, an unseen rapid or overhanging limb can have one cursing as he sloshes ahead of an overturned boat while "bobbing for gear". Be sure your equipment is secured with straps and bags while running.

For those who prefer walking, the laws regard-

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ing waterways of Utah have undergone some ground-breaking (no pun intended) changes recently. To quote the Utah Supreme Court ruling, “the public has a recreational easement to walk the privately owned bed of state waters while engaging in lawful recreational activities that utilize the water.” This basically means that because all water in Utah is owned by the public, a person has the right to access that water by walking stream beds—even on private property.

This is delicate territory, and much has been said on both sides of the issue regarding the rights of land owners and the rights of citizens to access their own natural resource. While I won’t attempt to express an opinion on the propriety of this ruling, I will say that some of the best fly fishing I’ve ever had is on the private property of friends and people I’ve obtained permission from. This is doubtlessly the result of the stream being left alone. For all their good intentions, even “catch and release” fishermen do much more damage to the health of a river merely by the way they walk through it than good by releasing the occasional trout. Ignorant anglers will think nothing of trampling through pristine spawning gravel beds to sneak up on a hole, or dislodging huge amounts of mud by churning up a bar at mid-stream. Such activities will lead to the death of that creek as surely as putting up a factory next to it.

When walking a creek a conscientious fisherman goes where there will be the least sediment thrown up. Wading on larger rocks or stepping from dry boulder to dry boulder is a much less invasive way of traveling a river. Keeping off river banks protects natural cover for fish and prevents erosion. Making sure one’s boots are washed and dry for several days between trips prevents the transfer of non indigenous snail or insect larvae or microbes that can cause ailments like whirling disease to new streams.

Sportsmen can go one further, and actually im-

prove a stream as they go. As a foolish youth I was once caught trespassing by a patrol man while fly fishing East Canyon Creek (which was private property at the time). “What is in the bag?” the officer asked as I stepped up from the river to the dirt road he was on. I opened the small garbage bag I had tied to my wader suspenders and showed him the beer cans, 2 liter bottles, and other detritus I’d picked up along the way as I fished (a practice I still do). As he sent me on my way without a ticket, he said “If it were up to me, I’d let you stay.” To summarize, land owners wouldn’t have nearly as many concerns about sportsmen if sportsmen weren’t so intentionally and ignorantly destructive.

Setting the soap box aside, it’s a practical fact that most of the smallest streams must be walked because there isn’t sufficient flow to support a boat. The good thing, is that there are hundreds if not thousands of miles of these creeks on accessible national forest and BLM property. Utilized in the correct way, these gems that give life to the land and beauty to the landscape can remain pristine. They all have a unique personality and feed a distinct ecosystem. The question and challenge is whether we can love them without loving them to death. I believe we can.



Dan Hill is an adventurer well acquainted with the diverse beauty of Utah. An environmentalist and responsible sportsman, he has biked, hiked, flyfished, hunted and climbed throughout Utah’s vast wilderness areas for more than 30 years.

Dan is a strapping lad...eight feet tall if he’s an inch. With steely blue eyes and a shock of hair, red like the fires of hell, he eats granite for breakfast, and glaciers for lunch. All fish fear him...all women want him.

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Everett Ruess:

An Open, Shut (and Open Again) Case

By Andy Anderson

Photos – Special Collections Dept.

J. Willard Marriott Library University of Utah

No one knew for sure who the skeleton was or how long it had been there. The dirt-encrusted bones seemed to have been hastily buried in the rock crevice along Comb Ridge, a gnarled 120-mile-long uprise of ancient rock near the Utah/Arizona border. Colorful shell beads lay around the corpse, and the tattered frame of a saddle rested not far outside the shallow fissure. On that cold day in the desert last January 2009, this pile of bones was just one of perhaps dozens of human remains (many of which were traditionally buried natives) scattered throughout the desolate landscape.

But in the days that followed, each rib, vertebrae, tooth, and skull fragment was delicately removed, wrapped, and driven 475 miles from nearby Bluff, Utah, to a lab in Boulder, Colorado. Spurred on by a series of encouraging clues, a writer, a Navajo carpenter, a wilderness guide, and a handful of scientists had a hunch—that these might be the remains of folk legend Everett Ruess.

In November of 1934, Ruess, a 20-year-old wanderer, writer, and artist from California, rode a burro out of Escalante, Utah and into the red rock void, never to be heard from again. Nearly 76 years later, his mysterious disappearance remains one of the most enduring folk legends of the American West.

His cult status has grown exponentially over the years, resulting in numerous books, two documentary films, and an annual arts festival in Escalante, Utah. In the book *Into The Wild*, Jon Krakauer devoted an entire chapter to the saga of Ruess and established multiple parallels between he and Chris McCandless, who gave up the confines of modern society and headed into the Alaskan wilderness, only to be found dead by a moose hunter months later.

Ruess, however, was never found, and rumors have stacked up over the years concerning what happened to him—some say he intentionally vanished

from society, others believe he tried to cross the Colorado River and drowned—but last spring, it appeared that one of them was actually true.

Born in 1914 in Oakland, California, Ruess was the younger of two boys in a tight-knit family whose frequent moves and passion for literature and the arts encouraged both his creative and nomadic tendencies. Aside from a few brief instances dabbling with school and city life, Ruess spent the majority of his short life tramping around the country's wildest regions, from the High Sierras to the vast desert Southwest.

Like many of the folkloric wanderers before and after him, Ruess was a loner by nature and kept eloquently detailed journals of his travels. In addition to his numerous letters and romantic prose, Ruess created numerous woodcuts and watercolor paintings that depicted the desert landscapes he frequented. In his biography *Everett Ruess: A Vagabond For Beauty*, W.L. Rusho wrote that Ruess “could sense beauty so acutely that it bordered on pain.”

Last seen by a group of sheepherders who shared their camp with him close to 50 miles outside of Escalante, Ruess forged into the desert wilderness and was never seen again.

Several months passed before a package of returned letters prompted his parents to organize a search party. The searchers reportedly found two burros and miscellaneous camping gear in Davis Gulch, although some have contended the fact that they actually belonged to Ruess. Downstream, they also found the inscription NEMO 1934, presumably a reference to Jules Verne's Captain Nemo in *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*, one of Ruess' favorite books. Ruess had been known to use pseudonyms in his writings and letters, previously adopting the names Lan Rameau and Evert Rulan, so it's not far-fetched to assume the inscription was his handy work.

Over the years, countless people have combed the

vast expanse between Escalante and Bluff in search of further clues, but most bore little to no concrete evidence; that is until two years ago.

Vaughn Hadenfeldt, the owner of Far Out Expeditions in Bluff, Utah, recounts the day Denny Bellson, a local Navajo man, came into his office and “basically announced he had found Everett Ruess,” he says.

David Roberts, a contributing editor of *National Geographic Adventure*, detailed Bellson's story in the April/May 2009 issue of the magazine.

In the article, Roberts told the haunting story of Daisy Johnson and her brother Bellson, whose grandfather, Aneth Nez, had told Johnson he witnessed three Ute Indians chase down and murder a young white man in Chinle Wash in the 1930s. According to Johnson, Nez brought the young man's body out of the wash and buried him in a rock crevice on Comb Ridge.

Roberts reported that in 1971, after Nez was diagnosed with cancer, he visited a medicine man who told him his illness was a result of interfering with the body nearly forty years prior. Johnson drove Nez back to Comb Ridge to retrieve a lock of hair from the corpse, and Nez later miraculously recovered after a medicine man administered a curing ceremony.

Johnson herself came down with cancer several years ago, and after chemotherapy failed to keep it in remission, she too visited a Navajo medicine man, who told her the cancer arose because of her grandfather. Johnson told her brother the story, and after several weeks of searching, Bellson discovered the haphazard gravesite.

Bellson and Johnson had never heard of Everett Ruess, but after Googling “Missing persons + Arizona/Utah + 1930s,” they discovered the tale and recognized the parallels in the two stories.



Hadenfeldt contacted Roberts, a friend of his, and persuaded him to come out to Bluff. "I don't think in the beginning that any of us were convinced," Hadenfeldt says.

Roberts had previously investigated the mystery and made plans to go to Comb Ridge. But Bellson had notified the FBI of the grave, and before Roberts could make it to the site, "the FBI team came in and trashed it completely," he wrote.

Roberts contacted Ron Maldonado, the supervisory archaeologist in the Cultural Resource Compliance Section of the Navajo Nation. Maldonado excavated two teeth, which were sent to Family Tree DNA in Texas for analysis. In September Of 2008, Roberts received word that results were inconclusive, but the subject was "'European in origin and not Native American.'"

"Had we not gotten what we thought was a very positive DNA analysis, we wouldn't have been out there," Hadenfeldt says. "There were always these little things that would come up, but there were also always ways to explain it or ways

around it. We kept getting led into the idea that this was Everett Ruess."

Encouraged by the test results, Roberts enlisted the help of Dennis Van Gerven, an anthropology professor at the University of Colorado, who helped Maldonado excavate the full remains.

Back in Colorado, Van Gerven and his assistant used fragments of the skull to create a facial reconstruction, which they then superimposed over a portrait of Ruess with Adobe Photoshop. They combined that comparison with the approximate height and age of the skeleton to achieve what seemed like a highly probable match. According to the story, Van Gerven told Roberts that, "'the odds are astronomically small that this could be a coincidence. I'd take it to court. This is Everett Ruess.'"

Kenneth Krauter, a professor of molecular, cellular, and developmental biology at CU-Boulder and research assistant Helen Marshall handled the DNA testing. The team compared bone fragment DNA from a femur bone with DNA taken from Ruess' living descendents, and found results conclusive enough to declare a match.

It seemed as if the mystery had finally been solved, Ruess' family given closure, and one of the Southwest's greatest mysteries finally put to bed.

But not everyone was so convinced.

In a joint statement released in June 2009, Utah state archaeologist Kevin Jones and forensic anthropologist Derinna Kopp questioned the initial DNA results and urged the family of Ruess to pursue a second round of testing.

Jones says he expressed concern even before the story in National Geographic Adventure came out.

"I think he rushed to publish [the article], and probably if it had been in the hands of a scientist, it would have never gotten that far."



In the statement, Jones pointed out inconsistencies with the skeleton's teeth, which were rounded down (likely from a diet of stone-ground grains), had untreated cavities, and featured shoveled incisors, all traits more characteristic of a Native American than a young Anglo male. Jones was also critical of the handling of the bones and the subsequent testing.

"I think it was unfortunately handled in a clumsy way," he says. "There were a few people in there, pawing around a bit before they ever got the tribal archaeologist down there," which compromised certain details of the site.

"[The facial reconstructions] looked like they were actually very badly done, and we knew that the DNA work had been done in a laboratory that was not experienced in doing DNA on ancient or degraded bone. They're a great DNA lab, but they're doing DNA from mouth swabs or modern DNA, and there are very substantial differences in how you go about it."

In October, at the behest of Ruess' descendents Brian and Michelle, the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory in Rockville, Maryland performed a new round of tests, and concluded that the skeleton was, in fact, a Navajo man, and not the remains of Everett Ruess.

Krauter and his team attempted to replicate their original results with no success, and the problem was later attributed to a glitch in the DNA computer software. This also disproved the results from the lab in Texas, which credited the mistake

to contaminated DNA.

According to the Navajo Times, the remains had been returned to Maldonado and the Navajo Nation, who hadn't disclosed what they planned to do with them.

"It was devastating to know that all this effort and work that all these people put it ended up for naught," Hadenfeldt says. "But the worst part is that we excavated some person who was obviously placed there for eternity, and needs to be placed back now."

He also alluded to the idea that Ruess' body could still be near the Comb Ridge burial site, although he doesn't think anyone will revisit the area to search for clues. Several historians have noted that the supposed gravesite is nowhere near where Ruess was last seen, but a second NEMO signature found in Grand Gulch in the '90s matches the one found 45 miles away in Davis Gulch in 1935. This places Everett, who had never mentioned exploring the Grand Gulch area, within a reasonable distance of Comb Ridge.

"I'm still convinced that there's some Anglo person that [Aneth Nez] witnessed the killing of who's buried out there, says Hadenfeldt. "I don't have much doubt that that part of the story is true."

According to Hadenfeldt, a follow up article was supposed to run in National Geographic Adventure, but the magazine folded in December. David Roberts is currently writing a book detailing the investigation and his research, as well as supposed new information that hasn't been printed.

Perhaps Ruess' disappearance was intentional and he lived out his days under an assumed identity. Maybe

he fell off a cliff in a careless moment or was drowned in the Colorado on his way to the Navajo Reservation.

But maybe it's just as well that the mystery has resumed its unsolved status. In a way, Ruess' uncertain fate helps to preserve the rich and enchanting lure of the Southwest and his representation of the undeniable wanderlust and yearning for adventure that we all feel. And with all the recent controversy, an entirely new generation has been drawn into this enduring saga.

Whether or not he meant to disappear, Ruess' passion for the natural world and desire to live out his life amidst it was unwavering. "I have been thinking more and more that I shall always be a lone wanderer of the wilderness," Ruess wrote to his brother Waldo in 1932. "I'll never stop wandering. And when the time comes to die, I'll find the wildest, loneliest, most desolate spot there is."

Once again, it seems as if he was right.



Andy Anderson self medicates his constant urge to wander into the middle of nowhere with the copious amounts of climbing and skiing in the Wasatch Mountains.



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